

# DRAMA UGS

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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXI, No. 1

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### Review: *MY SISTER EILEEN*

By Jack Palangio

Actors Jackie Scott and Jim Moore in a scene from *Berkley Square* as given at the San Diego, Calif., High School (Thespian Stage 551), with Lois Perkins as the author.



## ASK ME NO QUESTIONS

A Mystery Play in 3 Acts

By Lee Edwards

2 males, 6 females. Interior

Perry Thornhill, a well-known mystery novelist, upset over the fact he is unable to control his impulse to lie, summons Dr. John Pilsbury, a psychiatrist, and reveals to him the trouble and terrifying situations his lying has gotten him into.

In a flashback, it is seen that because of Perry's seemingly unconquerable habit, he and his fiancee, Phyllis Dixon, a young lady from the southernmost parts of Dixie, still a rebel, and with a very determined mind, have become involved in not one but five murders. This is bad enough, but what is worse is that the murders have been committed in Perry's own home, which he sublet to a Mrs. Baxter when he was called to Hollywood to do scenarios for the movies. In his attempt to try and solve the murders, he and Phyllis become involved in some of the most hilarious, although terrifying scenes ever viewed. He uncovers the murderer soon enough, but that only brings on more complications, since he and Phyllis are now both prisoners in his own home. Although the audience knows who did the murdering by the end of the first Act, the complicated business of bringing the murderer to justice is fraught with thrills and uproarious comedy. When the play comes back to the present in the final scene as Perry concludes telling the Doctor the story, a most ingenious and surprising denouement is reached and the play ends with a line which provokes hearty laughter from the audience.

Royalty, \$25.00. Books, 85 cents

## THAT BREWSTER BOY

A Comedy in 3 Acts

By Pauline Hopkins

6 males, 7 females. Interior

The closet in the Brewster living room plays a leading role in this hilarious play about young people and the innocent adults they involve. Besides being a catch-all for the family, the closet serves as a hiding place for a couple of characters who might reveal what the boys are up to.

It all starts when Joey Brewster decides his friend, Pee Wee, needs more experience with the female sex. In order to gain this experience, Joey has Pee Wee correspond with "Dear Alone in the World" in a matrimonial sheet. When "Dear Alone in the World" requests a picture, Pee Wee promptly sends her a picture of Dad Brewster.

Meanwhile, Dad and his daughter Nancy plan a surprise party for Mother to celebrate Dad's and Mother's wedding anniversary. Mother suspects they are keeping something from her, and Joey and Pee Wee encourage her to believe there is another woman.

"Dear Alone in the World" arrives in the person of Bonnie Bates, daughter of one of Dad's old sweethearts. The boys, frightened by the possibility of trouble, promptly hide her in the closet.

In the midst of this confusion, Bonnie's mother arrives with a policeman demanding to know what has become of her daughter. And, to complicate matters, Joey's jitterbug friends pop in all set to throw a big shindig. When the boys finally manage to clear the situation, Mother adds the crowning touch by explaining that their wedding anniversary is not until the following month.

Royalty, \$25.00. Books, 85 cents.

## DOMESTIC SYMPHONY

A comedy of Family Life

Based on Lillian Day's novel

By Alice Chadwick

6 males, 8 females. Interior

Pretty young Comilla Blake, who is almost sixteen and her ingenious brother Roger, who is all of fourteen, live in constant fear that their widowed mother, Lucy Blake, will marry a man who is not worthy of her. Mrs. Blake works in a large advertising agency and is so pretty and attractive that she is never at a loss for suitors. So far none of Lucy Blake's prospective husbands have managed to win the approval of her children. When it seems certain Lucy is going to marry one Judge Peters, Comilla goes to work and, with the aid of Roger, makes her Mum think that the Judge has purloined Mrs. Blake's fur coat. The judge, on the verge of a nervous collapse, returns to Florida. When Cam and Roger learn that their mother is often seen dining with a handsome stranger they are up in arms. How dare their mother dine out without bringing the men home and letting her children give him the once-over? Is their beloved Mum holding out on them? Summoning their gang in a pow-wow, Cam decides on a course of action. She discovers that her Mum's latest suitor is a Mr. Horace Winter from Chicago. Immediately she sends a note to Mr. Winter summoning him to the Blake home, telling him that it is a matter of life or death, and—she signs her Mum's name to the note! What follows is breath-takingly funny. The Blakes' apartment is turned into a veritable madhouse.

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## NOTES AND FOOTNOTES

by the  
EDITOR

Well, here we are at the beginning of another school year. We hope that you had a really enjoyable summer, packed with fun and relaxation. We also hope that you are looking forward to another season in dramatics, ready to give it your very best whether you are a teacher or a student. Above all else, we earnestly hope that the theatre program in which you will have a part this year will be the best yet in the history of your school. Remember that last year's record is not good enough for your 1949-50 season; you owe it to yourself and to your school and community to do better work this year. We wish you success.

Since this issue marks the opening of a new publication season for us, perhaps we should indicate now the general editorial policies we plan to follow during the next eight months. First, our editorial page will appear only when there is a real need for it; in all other instances this space will be made available for articles and reports. Secondly, we plan to publish as many articles in each issue as space will permit, without cutting our usual departments. A number of photographs contributed during the past season by Thespian-affiliated schools will also appear in print, although the bulk of these photographs will appear in our pictorial number (January issue). In view of the need to give more space to reports concerning theatre activities among the high schools (On the High School Stage), advertising space will be sold only to our regular clients, many of whom have been with us for many years. Our third major policy is that of welcoming all constructive suggestions and ideas contributed by our readers to the end that this may become a better magazine for educational theatre workers at all levels.

Speaking of advertisers, we believe it is sound business for our readers to support the firms whose advertisements we carry in these pages. They are reputable firms whose services and materials can be counted upon to give satisfaction. They are firms which help us meet printing costs. When you order from these firms, please say that you saw their advertisements in our magazine.

During this past summer, we had the opportunity to study reports of dramatics work done by over six hundred high schools last season. We were thrilled to find schools which offered several major productions, including pageants and operettas, twelve to fifteen one-act plays, several radio programs, and a variety of appearances before groups in the community. But these schools constituted not more than 10% of those whose record we examined. Another 50 or 60% of these schools reported an average of two major productions, two or three one-acts, an operetta or pageant, and perhaps one radio program. The remainder of these schools seem to be content with little more than a class play or two. Some gave no major productions at all; others gave a few one-act plays.

A study of these reports brings to light some rather important facts for all who are active in high school dramatics.

1. Entirely too many high schools do not give enough major productions. All valid ex-

cuses notwithstanding, our average high school should present not less than four major dramatic performances a season, not including operettas and revues. To offer less is to deprive children and townspeople of the opportunity to see a fairly well-rounded dramatics program.

2. Entirely too many schools fail to include the production of at least one classical play a season — a play given primarily for its literary and cultural values. Can anyone imagine a high school band which never plays music beyond the so-called popular numbers — that never plays selections by any of our great composers? Impossible, you say. Yet there are hundreds of high schools throughout this country which never attempt anything in the way of drama beyond second-rate comedies and farces. While the school band plays the music of Verdi, Wagner, and Bach, no one in the dramatics club will even suggest that the school give a play by Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Wilde, or Maxwell Anderson.

3. Entirely too many high schools fail to include as one of the season's outstanding performances a production of some well-known children's play, staged primarily for the enjoyment of the grade-school children. This is most tragic. In town after town one generation of children after another reaches adulthood without having seen one outstanding stage play. That is the United States of America in the year 1949. What a golden opportunity high school drama groups have to bring wholesome entertainment to children. What a unique opportunity they have to establish a love for the theatre in young hearts and minds.

4. Entirely too many dramatics directors seem to be under the impression that their failure to plan and direct an adequate dramatics program during the season is not particularly bad — that all professional shortcomings on their part should be forgiven. Wrote one director: "We did very little in dramatics this season, since this was my first year at this school." Can anyone imagine the athletic coach announcing at the close of the year: "We did very little in basketball and football this season, since this was my first year here." Perhaps so, but we wouldn't give two cents for the professional scalp of such a coach. Just why the dramatics director feels that she can get by with reasoning of this kind is one of those mysteries we fail to comprehend. But as long as that state of mentality exists among certain directors, and as long as we have school officials who fail to give directors of this kind an invitation to stay off the campus, dramatics in certain schools will continue to be the "mess" that it really is.

We remarked above that we are at the opening of another school year. Let's stop, if we have not already done so, and take stock of what we are doing and what we are not doing to give our children and community the very best we can provide in the way of an adequate, well-rounded dramatics program during the coming months. Let's do more than we have ever done, and let's do it better. Let's give our dramatics club or department the same prestige for quality work as is enjoyed by the majority of our school bands and teams throughout the country. If we do have a bad season, it must not be because of our lack of standards, lack of activities, or professional indifference. — ERNEST BAVELY

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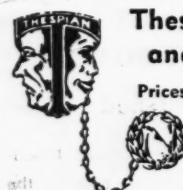
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# Dramatic Arts Conference Highlights

By JEAN E. DONAHEY

Director of Dramatics, Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School

WITH delegates arriving by train, busses and private cars from all sections of the country, the Third National Dramatic Arts Conference sponsored by The National Thespian Society opened with registration on the morning of June 13 on the campus of the Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana. By evening 586 full-time delegates had passed through the registration lines and were established in Rogers Center, one of several spacious dormitory units on the campus. The bustle and chatter in the dorms continued throughout the day as each incoming troupe was asked, "Where are you from? How many came from your school?" The early registrants willingly assisted the late-comers to get settled in their rooms and to find their way to the large dining hall where the delegates ate their meals throughout the conference week.

The first conference event got underway on the afternoon of June 13 with about 200 delegates reporting to the Auditorium for a tour of the theatre building under the direction of Donald H. Horton of the Indiana University. The trip included a visit back stage where technical director Vergil Smith explained the operation of the lighting system. That evening the official opening of the conference took place in the Hall of Murals with an informal reception. The reception line was headed by Thespian National Director Barbara Wellington of the B.M.C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Massachusetts. Others in the reception line included Thespian officers Blandford Jennings, Ernest Bavelly, Marion Stuart, and Jean Donahey; conference staff members Talbot Pearson, Sidney Spayne, Carl Cass, David Smith, and Kelly Yeaton; and Thespian Regional Directors Leon C. Miller, Margaret L. Meyn. A dozen members of Thespian Troupe 178 of the Washington High School, Massillon, Ohio, dressed in attractive uniforms, with Regional Director Herbert E. Rogers in charge, conducted over 500 delegates through the reception line in record time. An excellent production of Ibsen's *Ghosts* presented by the Indiana University Theatre with Gary Gaiser as director followed the reception.

The first major conference session opened in the auditorium at 9:00 a. m. the next morning with Ernest Bavelly, Thespian Executive-secretary, presiding. Welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Lee Norvelle, Head of the Indiana University Theatre, and by National Director Barbara Wellington. Miss Wellington thanked the Indiana University Theatre and the authorities of the University for the privilege of

returning to Bloomington for another national dramatic arts conference. Dr. Norvelle then presented the playwright and Broadway producer, Marc Connelly, who spoke on "The Playwright Looks at the Contemporary Theatre." (Some of Mr. Connelly's observations appear elsewhere in this report.) Following Mr. Connelly's address, student Harlan Randolph of Columbus, Ohio, and winner of the National Forence League's dramatic reading contest, presented his winning selections from Mr. Connelly's famous play, *THE GREEN PASTURES*. The audience was completely enthralled and gave both the reader and the author a splendid ovation.

Following the major addresses with which each conference day got underway, the delegates divided each morning into sectional meetings on Directing, Acting, Make-up, Radio, and Motion Picture Appreciation. These meetings which consisted largely of lectures and demonstrations were followed by round-table discussions and comments from the floor with the instructor in charge acting as chairman. Various aspects of the subjects mentioned above were covered during the week.

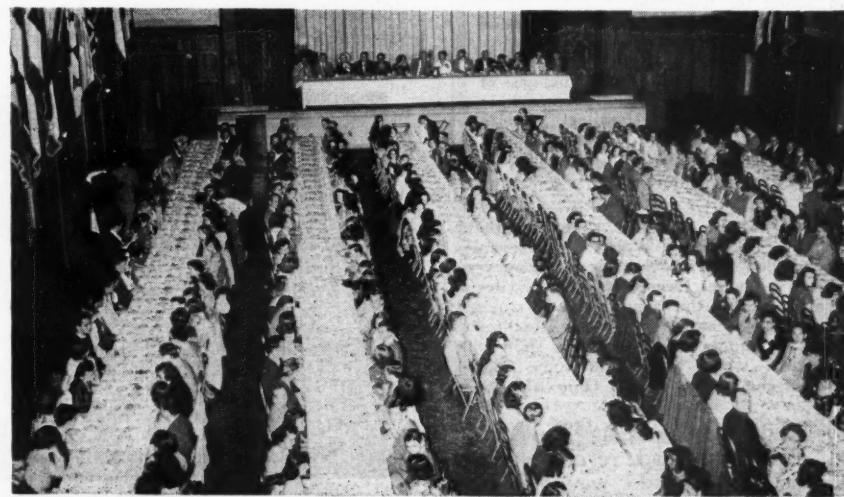
On Tuesday afternoon, the art of acting in comedy was demonstrated with a cutting from *The Man Who Came to Dinner* presented by Thespian Troupe 807, Bosse High School, Evansville, Indiana, with Lenore M. Cupp as director. This was followed by a second demonstration given by Troupe 759 of the Richmond, Indiana, Senior High School, with Myrtle M. Shallenburg as director. This group staged a cutting from *The Great Big Doorstep*. Between the two scene demonstrations, Thespian Jean Weiss of the Champaign, Illinois, Senior



Mr. Marc Connelly, author of *The Green Pastures*, was the first of four major speakers at the conference.

High School gave a reading entitled "Mama's Bank Account." After the demonstrations, a panel of experts composed of conference staff members pointed out ways by which the productions could be improved, complimenting the students and directors upon their effective work in stage business and characterizations. Late afternoon sessions were devoted to a discussion of "What Constitutes a Well-Rounded High School Theatre Program," with the speakers being directors from various high schools throughout the country, and a most effective demonstration on how to create special staging effects with lighting, given by Professor Gary Gaiser of the Indiana University Theatre.

The evening program was under the direction of the School of Speech of the Kent (Ohio) State University which presented a thrilling performance of *TEN NIGHTS IN*



Over five hundred delegates attended the conference banquet held on the night of June 17 in the Indiana University famed Alumni Hall. Conference directors and staff members are seated at the main table on the stage. Delegates from thirty-two states responded to the roll call which followed the banquet.

#### VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

By Marc Connelly:

... Box office attractions and the Ivory Tower plays both have their difficulties, for neither one gives a true picture of life.

... The playwright must recognize the composition of an audience ... distinguish between those seeking entertainment and those desiring real beauty.

... If the playwright can recognize the fundamentals of society, he has an obligation to do more than report the passing scene.

... Humility and devotion are needed by the talented to give man an awareness of the divinity within himself.

... One who uses the theatre as an escape does not make an audience. True audience is one who lets the theatre immerse him. The "process" begins when the people stop being "we" and being pulled by our receptivity become as "one."

... The theatre is no place for pride — it should be bigger than all of us together.

By Colonel C. Lawton Campbell:

... Until the common taxpayer sees the need for an expression of our national culture through a National Theatre, we will make little headway.

... The way to arouse the interest of the American in the theatre is to bring the theatre to him. To bring the theatre to the average American, we must have Little Theatres, college and high school theatres, civic opera companies and the like to make our audiences Theatre conscious ... Broadway will not come to the public.

By Norris Houghton:

... Securing good plays, securing financial backing, and the question of whether to star or not to star, are part of Broadway's headaches.

... Revivals are easier to do because there are no playwrights to consider at the rehearsals.

... The dreams of Broadway include reduced admission prices to reach more people, a repertory theatre, a creative theatre, and a real American Theatre as an expression of our pride in our national heritage.

By Sterling W. Fisher:

... There is a definite need for training in acting for television.

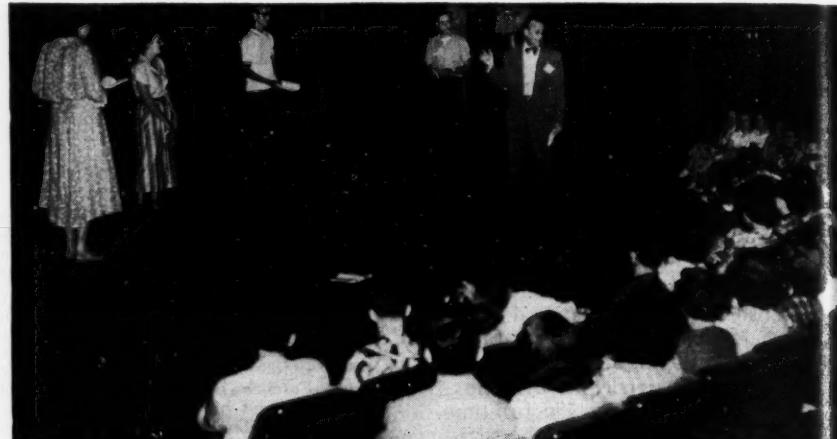
... There is an urgent need for good scripts for television shows.

... Television requires scripts calling for limited space and few changes of scenery.

... High school and college theatre groups should sponsor contests in the field of script writing for television.

A BARROOM in showboat style, under the direction of G. Harry Wright. The evening show included a prize candy sale and several acts of vaudeville. Delegates were privileged to see in action the same cast of students who won considerable fame for themselves during the summer of 1948 on the showboat, MAJESTIC, which played to some 35,000 people on the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers.

By Wednesday morning the conference registration had reached nearly 800. The day got under way with Miss Wellington presenting Colonel C. Lawton Campbell, chairman of the Board of Directors of the American National



The sectional meeting on Acting drew large attendance daily. This scene shows four students in a demonstration on acting with director Sidney Spayde of the Dock Street Theatre of Charleston, South Carolina, (extreme right) in charge.

Theatre and Academy, who spoke on the subject, "Towards A National Theatre." Col. Campbell advised the youth of today not to wait for Broadway to come to them, urging them to create their own theatre in the towns and cities they represented. The art of acting in drama was the theme of the scene demonstrations which followed that afternoon, with the first scene — a cutting from *Papa Is All* — given by Thespians of Troupe 583 of the Charles F. Brush High School, Cleveland, Ohio, with Anna L. Kingzett directing. The second scene demonstration — a cutting from *Jane Eyre* — was given by Thespians of Troupe 57 of the Columbus, Indiana, High School with Mildred Murray as director. Between these two scenes Thespian Dorothy Ann Beiz of Troupe 118 of the St. Teresa Academy, East St. Louis, Illinois, read the wooing scene from Shakespeare's *Henry V*. After appraisal of the performances by a panel of experts and comments by members of the audience, a number of delegates attended a sectional meeting on major public relations problems fac-

ing high school directors, while others went to a demonstration given by Melvin Pape of the Indiana University Theatre on "Creating Special Efforts With Stage Scenery." A special group of students reported for tryouts for a radio broadcast while these other meetings were in session.

One of the inspiring events of the conference was the performance of *All My Sons* given by the Marshall College Theatre of Huntington, West Virginia, with Clayton Page as director. At the final curtain a tribute of respectful silence followed before the audience rose as one to express their appreciation for the splendid work done by the cast and director.

The major address of the general assembly held on Thursday morning was given by Norris Houghton, Broadway Producer, editor, and author, with Blandford Jennings, Assistant National Director for The National Thespian Society, presenting the speaker. Mr. Houghton spoke on the subject, "Broadway's Dreams and Headaches." The afternoon program began with demonstrations on acting in melodrama. The first scene — Act III from *NIGHT MUST FALL* — was ably presented by students of Troupe 946 of the Elyria,



The closing event of the conference was a Thespian model induction ceremony presented by students of the Seton High School (Troupe 371) of Cincinnati, Ohio, with Sister Carita as director. This scene shows students in a processional march moving to the stage of Alumni Hall.



One of the Conference highlights was the NBC coast-to-coast broadcast on the afternoon of Saturday, June 18. Thespian students who took part in the broadcast are shown above. Front row (left to right): Robert Stone, Kilgore, Texas; Jo Ann Call, Connersville, Indiana; Lavenda Lathan, Carthage, Texas; Joan Perrott, Indianapolis, Ind.; Gladys Riddle, Benton Harbor, Michigan; Margaret Barker, Parkersburg, W. Va.; Ros Ritchie, Kingsport, Tenn. Back row (left to right): Maurice Kenily, Zanesville, Ohio; Jedd Gee, Lawrenceville, Illinois; Jim Peterson, Lima, Ohio; Dean Sander, West Liberty, Iowa; Jack Schroeder, Evansville, Indiana; David Wall, Fairmount, Indiana; Phil Truthers, Elyria, Ohio.

Ohio, High School with Nina J. Baker as director. The second scene — a cutting from *ANGEL STREET* — was given by students of Troupe 106 of the Champaign, Illinois, Senior High School. As with previous demonstrations of this kind, the audience joined with the experts in appraising the performances. This part of the conference program proved helpful to directors and students alike. The six schools participating in these demonstrations made excellent contributions to the conference program, in the manner in which they performed on the stage and in the fine quality of sportsmanship they exhibited during the course of the critical discussion of their performances by the experts and by members of the audience. Between scenes on Thursday afternoon Thespian Margaret Barker of Troupe 264 of the Parkersburg, W. Va., Senior High School read *THE SPY*.

"Effective Ways of Advertising High School Plays" was the final topic of discussion for the late afternoon meetings for directors. That same late afternoon Sara Spencer Campbell and Grace D. Rutherford, author of *Rip Van Winkle*, which was staged for the entire conference that evening, led a sectional meeting on "Producing Plays with High School Casts." A third event of that afternoon was the demonstration on "Creating Sound Effects on the Stage," given by Professor Gary Gaiser of the Indiana University Theatre.

The evening series of major shows came to a close on Thursday evening with a highly successful performance of *Rip Van Winkle*, given by the Junior Civic Theatre of Indianapolis. Everyone was delighted with the youthful performers in the large cast. The author expressed her appreciation of their work.

On Friday morning, Sterling W. Fisher of the National Broadcasting Company, Radio City, spoke on "Television and the Educational

Theatre." He stressed the need for more and better television scripts, and the need for special training required by actors appearing in television productions. The afternoon session with the experts was given to a discussion of various questions on high school dramatics. This event was lively and interesting and time was called before all questions could be discussed in full.

Friday evening Blandford Jennings presided at the conference banquet which drew an attendance of over 500. Representatives from thirty-two states were present. The dance which followed the banquet proved extremely popular with students and directors alike.

The final session on Saturday morning opened with a dress rehearsal of the student broadcast which went on the air coast-to-coast that afternoon over Station WLW of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the NBC network. The closing event of the conference was fittingly a colorful Thespian induction ceremony presented by members of Thespian Troupe 371 of the Seton High School, Cincinnati, Ohio, under the direction of Sister Carita. Especially effective was the verse choir presentation of *And No One Asked*.

By mid-afternoon most of the delegates had said a fond farewell to the new-made friends and were on their ways to the far corners of the nation, to share what they had learned with those at home. Thus came to a close another outstanding dramatic arts conference sponsored primarily for the improvement of dramatic arts work at the high school level.

## NEW READINGS and ORATIONS

In our 1950 catalog are listed many new, outstanding readings and orations. Here are a few of the titles.

### HUMOROUS

<b>Double Trouble</b> Leota Hulse Black	60¢
<b>The Florist Shop</b> Winifred Hawkridge. (From the play)	75¢
<b>School Daze</b> Leota Hulse Black	60¢

### DRAMATIC

<b>Blind Faith</b> John M. Martin	60¢
<b>The Finger of God</b> Percival Wilde. (From the play)	75¢
<b>Short Cut</b> Percival Wilde. (From the play)	75¢
<b>Trifles</b> Susan M. Glaspel. (From the play)	75¢
<b>Where Poppies Grow</b> Leota Hulse Black	60¢

### ORATIONS

<b>Were You There?</b> Won 1st in Ill., 2nd in Eastern and National Collegiate Contests, 1948, and 1st in NATIONAL N.F.L. Contest, 1949.	50¢
<b>Age of Anxiety</b> Newton L. Margulies	50¢
<b>Common Sense</b> Everett G. Steele	50¢
<b>Freedom's Foundation—Our Constitution</b> Miller Peters	50¢
<b>Highway Safety</b> Jesse W. Randall	50¢
<b>Human Liberty</b> Gordon L. Hostetter	50¢
<b>Lincoln and Edison</b> George E. Sokolsky	50¢
<b>Magnificent Obsession</b> Dr. Frank Glenn Lankard	50¢
<b>Mankind's Moment of Decision</b> Francis Cardinal Spellman	50¢
<b>National Theatre</b> Maureen Ibberson	50¢
<b>Our American Destiny. What are We Going to Do About Communism? What is Communism?</b> Three orations by Senator Mundt (N.F.L. President.)	each 50¢
<b>Our Torch</b> William E. Robinson	50¢
<b>Pulse of a Nation</b> Duane L. Day	50¢
<b>Security vs. Freedom, Ambition, Incentive</b> William E. Robinson	50¢
<b>Skeletons All</b> Roger J. Fritz	50¢

### WETMORE DECLAMATION

#### BUREAU

Sioux City, Iowa

Mention *Dramatics*

# An Experiment in Campus Theatre

By GEORGE B. MOON

Director of Dramatics, Redondo Union High School, Redondo Beach, Calif.

DRAMATICS on the high school stage has long been a function of the traditional junior and senior play with an occasional variety show or one-act contest play introduced for good measure. Only recently, experimental types of reading theatre, central staging, and campus theatre have been added. These have given educational theatre in the high school a broader scope than traditional practices have permitted in the past. We realize, of course, that there is far more to be done with the high school stage than we are doing even at the present time. Every experiment, every new idea or every old one refurbished is worthy of mention and consideration. It is the aim of every high school teacher of drama to include the kind of teaching and the kind of theatre which will stimulate imagination, provide more opportunities for student expression, and strike home to some of the speech, personality, and social adjustments needed by those participating in the speech and dramatic activities of the school.

For many years, the three-act play has represented the chief point of concern in the dramatics classes. It is a desirable form, representing the author's best literary efforts, the progressive development of character, and the social and political significance of the era in which it was written. Drama in its longer form is excellent for special projects which warrant a period of six or eight weeks of intensive preparation; however, student interest and demand sometimes makes it necessary to shorten the play form used and increase the number of opportunities during a school year. We must not confuse the issues of

educational theatre with showcase performances.

In regard to the short play form, Doctor William Butler, Director of Drama, University of Southern California, reminds us of the great number of theatre groups which have used the one-act form most successfully. Among those of note are *The Abbey Players*, *Theatre Libre*, *Provincetown Players*, and *Actors Lab* of Hollywood. Writers who composed especially in the realm of the one-act play included such notables as Lady Gregory and Lord Dunsany. Experimenting widely with the use of the one-act play, Doctor Butler maintains that the short play form is ideal as a teaching device — "Because there is a sense of completeness in presenting the shorter form which seems best suited to the short attention span of the high school student who likes the unbroken progression of a story. This attitude is partly a result of a movie or radio conditioned mind."

With an increasing interest in stage activities and a need for more opportunities for student productions, Troupe 462, Redondo Beach, California, set forth on a Campus Theatre Project last year which proved to be highly popular with the students who participated or who attended the plays. The group functioned primarily as a Drama Productions class organized especially for the purpose of offering an advanced period of training for those students who had completed work in speech or dramatics offered in other classes. A

few were admitted who had received outside training in some special field of theatre.

The purpose of the Campus Theatre was to provide noontime entertainment during the two lunch periods. The group later extended its activities to include community clubs and other organizations which made request through the principal of the school. Careful organization was necessary to carry on a program of this kind. The Thespian office became the play productions policy making and agency headquarters for the Campus Theatre activities.

In the Productions Class, one-act plays were read and selected for future presentation. Problems of staging were carefully considered. Budgets were made with five dollars as the maximum expenditure for any play produced; many presentations cost far less. A producing staff for each play was appointed and a student director placed in charge of each group. Over a period of time, these duties were rotated in order to provide many types of training for each student. Ten cents admission was considered a fair charge, and the proceeds were evenly divided between the Thespians and the school activity fund which provided other forms of entertainment on campus.

Two weeks were allowed for rehearsal on each play; frequently, more than one play was being rehearsed during the same period. The workshop idea caught on fast and the students applied themselves energetically to meet the prescribed deadlines. Drama with a purpose and a definite goal seemed to replace the fad-and-frill idea which has prevailed too long. Other departments in the school displayed a genuine interest in the work, and teachers became frequent patrons of the plays. It seems highly possible, with time permitting, that many phases of work could be correlated with other departments functioning through Campus Theatre productions. It would take time and unlimited teacher-student cooperation to work out the details of such a program. Our more immediate concern was one of entertainment rather than additional audio-visual aid.

As the Campus Theatre got underway with two performances a week, response was found to be most gratifying. Frequent requests were made for repeat performances or special types of plays. As one would suspect, the most popular plays were the comedies; however, it was the express hope of the Thespian committee in charge that others would find proportionate favor. Sufficient variation in the type of play presented was maintained in order to provide audience appeal as well as a wider range of character types portrayed and techniques of staging involved. No play ended without a full consideration of its problems, future recommendations for improvement and other matters of chief concern. Before long, students evidenced a keener appreciation of what constitutes good theatre. Voted as the most successful presentations were: *Pink and Patches*, *How to Propose*, *Suppressed Desires*, *Trifles*, and *Gloria Mundi*. More



Students of the Redondo Beach, California, Union High School (Thespian Troupe 462) in a scene from *Suppressed Desires* presented as part of their "Campus Theatre" program, with George B. Moon as director.

**NOW AVAILABLE**  
**HOW THEY WERE STAGED** (Supplement No. 3), edited by Earl W. Blank. Contains complete information on the staging of *YEARS AGO*, *A SCRAP OF PAPER*, *THE GLASS MENAGERIE*, *WE SHOOK THE FAMILY TREE*, *THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE*, *NICHT MUST FALL*, and *I REMEMBER MAMA*. Price, 60 cents.  
**THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY**  
 College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, O.

should be planned in the way of original one-act plays.

In the regular speech and drama classes, students were busy with plans for the next year. They urged the addition of another Productions Class to make room for more student participants. There was a decided increase of interest in daily classwork. Campus Theatre seemed to be the students' spontaneous idea, not an educational function imposed upon them. The literature of the theatre had an immediate outlet and the personages and history of theatre seemed no farther away than the school stage itself. Here, indeed, was a workshop or a drama laboratory complete with stage, lights, costume, setting and an audience composed of fellow-students and interested teachers. For the director, it was a thrill equal to that experienced when the house-lights dim and the curtain rises on a first performance.

We feel that our first year of Campus Theatre was a real success and we hope that other groups will share our enthusiasm in organizing similar groups. We are surely not convinced that we have achieved the ultimate goal in the field of educational theatre, but our course is set in the right direction.

For those groups considering similar activities we hope the following suggestions may prove helpful: 1. Discuss the project with the coordinator of student activities to make sure that a Campus Theatre would fit into the scheme of noontime activities. Perhaps your school can suggest another time more suitable. 2. With the coordinator's assistance, sell the principal and head of the English or speech department on the proposed idea. 3. Discuss the project in your next general troupe meeting. 4. Elect a Campus Theatre board of directors with a student representative from each grade level. 5. Organize a productions staff or a special Productions Class which meets every day of the school week. This latter idea is better since it gives a reason for pre-requisite courses in speech and dramatics. 6. Appoint all special committees from the Thespian troupe at large. This serves to coordinate activities of the entire group. Bear in mind that the Campus Theatre is just one theatre activity functioning under Thespian regulation. There should be other activities. 7. Let the Thespian office serve as a central bureau for clearing all matters pertaining to booking plays for community groups, establishing deadlines, issuing calls, releasing publicity, accepting notes of criticism or suggestion, issuing tickets and collecting money as well as carrying on other essential activities necessary to the smooth running of your Campus Theatre.

With these things in mind, we wish you as much success and pleasure as we have had with our experiment.

# American Musical Theatre

## Antecedents and Developments to 1865.

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York 18, N.Y.

**I**T has been said that America's only contribution to theatrical art has been the musical. This is not completely true since we have shown the way to many technical improvements — to mention only one facet of pioneering. The musical does, however, express something of our national characteristics in a singular way. It catches the tempo, a love of variety and color, an exuberance which are parts of the American spirit.

This contribution having been made, it is not peculiar that we adopt toward the musical so condescending an attitude. On most occasions we are a bit too eager to herald our own accomplishments. We exhibit "our tallest buildings," discuss "our richest institutions," sell "our best wares"; but when we talk theatre we refer to the musical as "the tired business-man's show" or "leg art" or "girly shows." A multiplicity of causes have created this attitude.

In this and subsequent articles which will run in *DRAMATICS* through the season, I shall endeavor to depict the development of the musical phase of the American theatre. Through the first four articles there will be a chronological account of the development of the American musical. Each of the final three pieces will give a detailed picture of the most important musical forms: the operetta, the "book show" and the revue and extravaganza. Let us, therefore, strike up the band!

Any attempts to trace the beginnings of the theatre in the United States (or in the colonies of Great Britain as they then were), is a most difficult task. Little record was kept concerning such activity. For one thing, the early settlers were probably much too occupied in securing the necessities of life to give much thought to diversions. Most importantly, the prevailing thought of society tended to regard the theatre as an instrument of the devil and altogether unbecoming the taste of any righteous person.

To acquire a comprehensive picture of the state of theatre in the colonies, we must look briefly at that of the mother country. From 1642 until 1660, under the Commonwealth, the theatres of England had been closed. The entertainments were offered illegally and under considerable subterfuge. The colonists of the early seventeenth century were of the faction which upheld this practice. In the first volume of Professor George C. D. Odell's monumental *ANNALS OF THE NEW YORK STAGE*, we learn that in Virginia in 1665, three young men were accused "for acting a play of ye Bare and ye Cubb, on ye 27th of August," and that these men were ordered to "appeare ye next in

This is the first of a series of seven articles by Mr. Myers on the history of the American musical theatre. We recommend the use of these articles as material for study and discussion in dramatics club meetings. — EDITOR

Court, in those habitants that they then acted in, and give a draught of such verses, or other speeches and passages, which were then acted by them." We do not know if the culprits performance was of a musical nature, but it is quite likely to have been so. In the colonies of New England such men as Increase Mather regretted in 1687 that "there is much discourse of beginning Stage-Plays in New England."

One can be certain that theatrical performances continued to be presented throughout the colonies all during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In the mother country, the great dramatists of the Restoration were writing their immortal comedies. Colley Cibber, Mrs. Oldfield, Nell Gwyn were among the actors of the period. It is inconceivable that a people who derived largely from a country in which a love of theatre has been so deeply imbedded would not transplant some of the art to their new country. Thanks to the untiring efforts of our theatre historians — Odell, T. Allston Brown, Joseph Ireland, William Dunlap, George Seilhamer — we have some record of these performances. A phrase here and there has been gleaned from a diary or a letter or a ledger, and bits of our theatrical heritage come alive for us.

Scanning these accounts for a trace of musical activity I found such notes as:

1. From the *Journal of the Rev. John Sharpe of New York*, 27 September, 1710: "at night a Consort at Mr. Broughtons."

2. From a letter of Samuel Sewall to Secretary Addington regarding the use of the Town Hall of Boston: "our Town-House was built for the sake of very serious and important business. Let it not be abused with dances or other scenical diversiments."

3. From a contract recorded at Yorktown, 11 July, 1716, by which William Livingston agrees with Charles and Mary Stagg, "actors" to build a theatre in Williamsburg and to provide Actors, scenery and music out of England.

4. From a diary, 2 April, 1750, "COLIN AND PHOEBE," the sketch being sung by Mr. Woodham and Mrs. Taylor in pastoral dress."

As we approach the period of the American Revolution, we note that theatre buildings had been erected in the principal cities of the colonies. Entertainments were presented with increasing regularity. The casts consisted both of imported companies from abroad and of natives — professional and amateur.

Royal Tyler's *The Contrast*, said to be the first play by an American author dealing with an American theme, had been produced at the John Street Theatre in New York on the 16th of April, 1786. Though it was not a musical, the play has obvious importance in any account of our theatre's development. As the feeling of nationalism grew through the pre-Revolutionary period, other writers turned to the theatre for an audience. Thomas Godfrey, James Thomson, and Mercy Otis Warren are among the playwrights who wrote of America's liberty. These plays, of course, elicited retorts from the Tory sympathizers. General Burgoyne himself wrote for the theatre. An anonymous comic opera, *The Blockheads; or, Fortunate Contractor* was produced about this time. It upheld the cause of Great Britain.

It is about the time of the Revolutionary War, too, that we begin to pick up some threads which offer a continuity from that early theatre down to our own day. New York we remember, was a stronghold of the British forces. Several benefit theatrical performances were offered by companies made up of military personnel. One is reminded of the activities of Irving Berlin, one of the most famous figures in this country's musical story. During World War I, while stationed at Camp Upton on Long Island, Berlin wrote a musical called, YIP, YIP, YAPHANK. The show was staged with great success by an all military cast and staff. In it occurred one of the most famous songs Berlin ever wrote, "Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning." Soon after the United States' entrance into World War II, Irving Berlin wrote a soldier show, THIS IS THE ARMY. After opening in New York on the 4th of July, 1942, the play toured all about the country, played to large audiences in England and was done as a film. Berlin, himself, sang the complaint about reveille and the threat that "someday I'm going to murder the bugler." As we see, soldier shows are an old story in the American theatre.

With the Revolution successfully concluded, the United States further solidified its theatre. Though we still emulated the theatre of England, we were acquiring more native expression. John Howard Payne's *Clari*, *The Maid of Milan*, with music by Sir Henry Bishop, was produced in 1823. The premiere, oddly enough, took place at the Convent Garden Theatre in London. Payne and *Clari* were both accepted by the American public upon the author's return to his home. One of the songs from the opera, "Home Sweet Home" has become what today's radio announcers would term "one of the all-time favorites on America's hit parade." The country was beginning to attract some notice in the theatres of Europe.

About this time, too, we began to develop a tradition of acting. Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, George Frederick Cooke, Edmund Kean, Charles and Fanny Kemble, James Henry Hackett, J. W. Wallack, Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Forrest are the titans of these years. Their repertoire consisted largely of Shakespeare and tragic-dramas of a non-musical nature. Without them, how-



Thomas D. "Daddy" Rice — the original "Jim Crow."

ever, we would have built up no theatre at all.

A second connecting thread was beginning to be spun at this time. Few of us have ever seen a real minstrel show, but it was a form of entertainment in which our parents took considerable delight. It caught something of the American idiom and for almost a century enjoyed a considerable vogue. Many of our amateur groups still endeavor to simulate this type of show, but the form varies considerably from the free-for-all of the early minstrel days. When we come to examine the revues of the '20s we shall see how much they derive from the minstrel shows. Any examination of modern American music would also reveal this debt.

The first recorded black-face act in this country was given at the Federal Theatre, Boston, on the 30th of December, 1799. The late Charles T. White, a life-long student of minstrelsy, found notice in the BOSTON GAZETTE that "a Mr. Graupner sang a song called 'The Negro Boy.'" Mr. White has also recorded for us that in 1815 "an actor, Pot Pie Herbert (is not this a reminder of some of today's bebop musicians) sang 'The Battle of Plattsburg' in Albany."

The earliest major figure in this field was Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice — the original "Jim Crow." In Edward Le Roy Rice's MONARCHS OF MINSTRELSY, we find the following account of the origin of this famous act. "In his sphere he was proficient, and he kept his wits upon the alert for everything that might be turned to professional and profitable use. Thus it was that, as he sauntered along one of the main thoroughfares of Cincinnati, as has been written, his attention was suddenly arrested by a voice ringing clear and full above the noises of the street, and giving utterance, in an unmistakable dialect, to the refrain of a song to this effect:

"Turn about an' wheel about an' do jis so,  
An' ebery time I turn about I jump Jim Crow."

"Daddy" Rice disclosed his find in Pittsburgh in the autumn of 1830. Our historian continues: "The effect was electric. Such a thunder of applause as followed was never heard before within the shell of that old theatre." Thus one of the first of our musical stage's immortals came into being.

From the end of the War of 1812 through the first half of the nineteenth century, an increasing number of European theatrical troupes visited these shores. On November 10, 1834, the Italian Opera Association appeared at the opera house at Leonard and Church Streets in New York. Several French operatic and ballet organizations found an eager public among the new country's citizenry. New York, in fact, very early established itself as the theatrical capital of the United States. It was the principal port of entry and, therefore, the seat of commerce. With the accumulation of wealth, came the audience with enough leisure to cultivate a taste and an appreciation. One could wish that steps could have been taken then to curb the centralization which has of late so marred American theatrical organization.

The principal seat of musical entertainment in the metropolis in the early nineteenth century was Niblo's Gardens. About 1800, a circus and training ground for racing horses was set up at the intersections of Broadway and Prince Street. During the second war for independence, the enclosure was used as a drill ground for the militia. Around 1823, it was occupied by the Columbian Gardens, where open-air entertainments — mainly of a musical nature — were offered. In this year, too, William Niblo leased the property. During the remaining years of that decade the place suffered the fires and travails common to all theatres of the period. During the summer of 1829, Mr. Niblo opened the theatre he called Niblo's Gardens. A partial list of the artists who appeared in the "concerts" there through the ensuing years would include the Ravel Family, Clementine De Bar (after Mrs. Junius Brutus Booth, Jr.), Joseph Jefferson, J. B. Buckstone, Edwin Forrest, William Burton, Dion Boucicault, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams. On June 17, 1834, the polka was first danced in New York at this theatre by Mary Taylor and H. Wells in a sketch called "Polkamania." On December 3, 1851, at the fourth annual benefit of the American Dramatic Fund, Adelina Patti made her debut at the age of eight. Many of the musicals were adaptations into burletta form of well-known plays. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, obviously lent itself to such usage quite easily.

It was at Niblo's gardens, too, that the first musical (as we use the term in the modern theatre) of the American theatre was presented. This was *The Black Crook* which was presented there soon after the conclusion of the Civil War. It is at this point that we shall resume the story in the following article.

# From Schoolroom to Little Theatre

By DORIS ADLEY

Director of Dramatics, South Kitsap High School, Port Orchard, Wash.

THESPIAN Troupe No. 545 and South Kitsap's Drama Club have been very much handicapped by lack of a suitable space in which to work. Our high school is one of those institutions with a gym-auditorium, having impossible acoustics (from the stage you shout to be heard in the middle rows) and a share plan with basketball during the months from November through March. This situation is one of long standing and apparently will continue to give us that "neglected orphan child" feeling for years to come.

We are an enthusiastic group of players, however, and have given plays drawingroom-style many times when staging was impossible. The idea grew that if we had an ordinary classroom where we could call our things our own, we could make a drawingroom theatre, hold our meetings, rehearse our plays, produce them with a minimum of preparation on lights, furniture and sets. We could also speak lines without shouting ourselves hoarse. We live in a community where two large wartime housing projects are being dismantled. Although our high school buildings still cannot accommodate our school population without stretching, one of the grade schools two miles away had two adjoining rooms which were used only for storage. Our school superintendent and grade school principal handed us the keys and the two rooms with their blessing and said "go to it." That was all the encouragement we needed. These two classrooms were given to us shortly before Christmas vacation, 1947; so we mustered our forces and spent most of our holiday week from 10:00 a. m. to 3:00 or 4:00 p. m. cleaning, planning, and bringing our theatre into being.

Both rooms have outside doors as well as those leading into the hallway. So we have our own private entrances, whether or not school "keeps" in the rest of the building. A portion of the brick wall between the two rooms was removed to make an entrance from one to the other. One room we converted into dressing rooms for girls and boys with enough space left for make-up tables along the walls. There is also some room for storage of furniture, props and make-up. Individual cupboards hold personal belongings — one for each member.

In the other room the help of the school electrician and carpenter was necessary to make screens, risers and dual lighting system. The screens were made of plywood ten feet tall. They each had four hinged sections about 2 feet wide, so when opened they covered an 8-foot space. They were

painted white and with them we can shape our room or make entrances wherever we wish. In the drama, *High Window*, we made a very effective set by fitting French windows into the space between two screens. Our risers were made in two sizes. They are all ten inches from the floor and are wide enough to comfortably give knee room between the rows. They will hold either two or four chairs and are, therefore, small enough to be easily handled as we change our seating arrangement to suit the staging of the play. They can also be stacked to make twenty or thirty-inch risers when several raised rows are necessary.

Lights in the drawingroom theatre can also be the curtain. We copied the method used at our own University of Washington Penthouse Theatre when our electrician made a dimmer system which we use at the beginning of each act to blackout the room, allowing the actors to take their places. This system operates lights on six tall standards for which we made bright colored shades using butcher paper and showcard colors. The light from these lamps sheds a soft-colored glow. With subdued background music from a phonograph behind the screen, the effect is most pleasant.

The overhead lights are from six indoor spots coming from fixtures in the ceiling where the original class-room lights were located. The fixture is similar to a gooseneck study lamp and spots are directed toward the playing area. Both sets of lights are controlled from switches just inside the dressing room door.

The black board and bulletin board were problems. They could not be removed; so we borrowed from our drama club funds and bought 20 yards of 54-inch striped ticking in rose and blue. This we stitched into drapes. They were hung about 2 feet from the ceiling and dropped to the bottom of the blackboard. The bulletin board we kemtoned ivory; made large paper mache masks of comedy and tragedy; painted them with showcard colors; and hung them in pairs at each end. Our framed charter and membership roll along with an attractive poster naming the theatre staff are hung in the center. One would hardly recognize this attractive panel as the dirty brown bulletin board with which we began.

Next we needed double curtained entrances to make a light tight room for the beginning and ending of an act. From the closed recreation hall at the project we secured some neutral green-gray, heavy drapery material. This we hung on rods in the entrances. A second drape was hung some distance back of the first so the actor could step into the entry-way and drop the curtain behind him before he entered the theatre through the door-way curtain. Plywood was put on the outside windows to make them lightproof, and our theatre was ready for use.

We first organized a theatre staff using senior Thespians as managers of Business, Stage, Advertising and Programs, Costumes, Intermission and Ushers, Lights and Music, Make-up, and General Supplies. Under these eight managers the junior Thespians selected the jobs that would interest them most and thus apprentices for next year's staff receive their experience.

The last of January, 1948, found us ready to try our first Penthouse performance. We held our Thespian initiation in the small auditorium adjoining the theatre; then proceeded to the Penthouse where senior Thespians entertained with the comedy, *Not Tonight*. The committee for intermission served punch and cookies from attractively arranged tables in the large lobby at the theatre entrance, when the entertainment ended.



Scene showing one of the corners in the Little Theatre described by Miss Adley.

## Two Christmas Plays

By Elizabeth McFadden

### TIDINGS OF JOY

Theme: A present-day Joseph and Mary with their baby are to be evicted from their home on Christmas Eve. Parts: 12 boys (may be reduced to 6 by combining minor parts), 6 girls, extras only if desired. Time: 40 minutes. Scene: plain interior. Costumes: ordinary dress, or Scout uniforms. Music: lovely old carols.

"Its strong plea for friendliness and charity makes 'Tidings of Joy' particularly good for the purpose of raising relief money."—Review in the Girl Scout Leader.

### WHY THE CHIMES RANG

Called "the Christmas standby," has been played more than 8,000 times. Theme: A boy gives his heart with his good deed. Parts: 2 boys, 1 man, 2 women, 7 extras. Scene: simple interior backed by a vision of a chancel. Costumes: medieval. Music: very beautiful.

Price, each play, 40 cents Royalty, \$5.00

### SAMUEL FRENCH

25 W. 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.  
7623 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood 46, Calif.

Kitsap County Drama Conference, sponsored by us, February 9, for neighboring high schools, ended its evening activities in the Penthouse with a play by the senior Thespians, and punch and dancing in the lobby, afterward.

On February 19, we attempted a more ambitious project. The junior play, *QUIET SUMMER*, previously given on the high school stage, on December 19, was produced drawing room style. We trembled at our nerve in attempting to get 18 characters on the small playing area at one time but somehow it worked. Members of the audience most of whom had seen the stage production approved our idea and asked when the next production was to be.

With the senior play rehearsals beginning soon, the Drama Club took over for an evening in March and gave a program of four one-acts, to a full house. Their choice included the comedies: *Nobody Sleeps, If the Shoe Pinches, Food, and Yes Means No*. The Thespian Theatre Staff again functioned. During the school day the high school dramatics class used the theatre to produce, for their own training experience and for the entertainment of study halls and English classes, four one-act plays. These were directed by members of the class and staged by the cast itself. Students were transported by bus to the theatre and back to school. This means that our theatre has been used on an average of twice a week, either afternoon or evening, since January, 1948.

This article on the "pride and joy" of Troupe No. 545 is a product of a very sincere desire to interest the reader in a high school project which has brought us a great deal of enjoyment. A great deal of work is involved, it's true, but when a group of students willingly spends vacation hours, spare afternoons and evenings on such a venture, when they request a summer theatre and a repeat performance of the senior play, *January Thaw*, after school has closed, there must be something that dramatics can contribute to high school life, if it is allowed a chance to expand a little and to experiment with its possibilities.

# Theatre Background and History

By TALBOT PEARSON

Formerly, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE theatre thrives upon illusion. It is a game of make-believe, a sort of conspiracy, with the actors begging us, the audience, to pretend that we accept them as kings, merchants, soldiers, lovers or villains. We are willing partners in the game, we say to the actors: "Go ahead, we'll play with you; but you must keep us interested, you must exert yourselves, we must enjoy ourselves all the time." This is what makes "live theatre" unique, because every audience is different, every performance is geared to each audience's particular requirements and reactions, so no two performances are ever quite alike. Nothing is standardized, there is always opportunity for improvement, for enriching the work of the actor and for increasing the enjoyment of the audience. No mechanized form of entertainment can promise this; no actor in front of a camera or a microphone can enjoy the warmth of a live audience and no moviegoer can, by his reactions, inspire a star to greater heights of performance or make his favorite comedian any funnier by his solitary reception of a radio program.

There has been mimicry and the telling of stories since the dawn of the human race, but drama as a form dates only from the birth of Western civilization. The Greeks developed drama as a part of their religious observances. The Theatre is older than Christianity. Performances in the great outdoor theatres (the Greek word for a "place for seeing") were festivals attended by audiences, or congregations of 20,000 or more; some of the great arenas still remain to attest those figures. Originally the program, which lasted from dawn to dusk, consisted of choral dances and recitations in honor of the god Dionysius. The first of the theatre managers, Thespis, who was born around 700 B.C., added an actor who with speech and mimicry, filled in the intervals between the singing and dancing. The religious nature of these festivals inspired the great poets, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, to compose their great tragedies calling for the addition of more actors and a story. Scenery and costumes followed, and then came the development of comedy. Aristophanes, 2400 years ago, wrote satires on contemporary events and put together pieces which are not unlike our modern comic operas. Such plays were usually performed at the end of the day, after the great audiences had been enthralled by the tremendous stories of the tragic plays, and the comedies were characterized by their accent on enjoyment and freedom from restraint. Both tragedy and comedy were the outlets for great creative energy, and the drama was an essential part of Greek life.

The Roman theatre was begun by Greek actors but it never reached the grandeur of Greece, and Roman comedy gradually became so vulgar and obscene that the early Christian leaders may be

### THEATRE ENJOYMENT

The word "theatre" is commonly used in two senses. It may mean the building, the space or area, in which dramatic and musical performances are given, or it may mean the story of what has happened within those architectural structures throughout past centuries. And not only what has happened but what is now happening and, in spite of radio, movies and television, what will probably go on happening for many more centuries.

When we speak of theatre enjoyment, therefore, we are not thinking of the very real thrill that comes from walking along a marble-floored lobby or occupying a luxurious seat in an ornate auditorium, but the enjoyment of participating in a performance of a play. It may be participation as an actor, dancer, designer or property man, or it may be as a member of an audience. Because a play is not a play at all without an audience, and an audience must see and hear—and be seen and be heard—if the real meaning of "theatre" is to be realized. Even Shakespeare studied in the classroom or read in the armchair is no more than poetry, philosophy, history and whatnot. It is only when those wonderful lines are spoken aloud and the story acted out for an audience that *HAMLET*, for instance, becomes a vivid experience and not merely a catalogue of quotations. The audience is tremendously important to the theatre, but it must enjoy itself or it will stay away and find something else to do. To know something of the origins and the history of this great civilizing influence which is Theatre may help to add to the enjoyment of some future audiences.

forgiven for exerting all their efforts to wipe it out. But they destroyed the good with the bad, and in their anxiety to break up the indecent pantomimes of the "mimes" they initiated the Dark Ages of the drama.

Until the Church itself, seven or eight centuries later restored respectability to the theatre through the dramatization of Biblical incidents the only actors were descendants of those rather disreputable mimes who bootlegged their trade from town to town across Europe. Strolling players is the romantic name we give them, actually they were wandering vagabonds who lived for the most part under cover for fear of the police or the clerical authorities.

But these vagabond mummers entertained audiences and kept theatre alive and while their stock-in-trade was generally no more than clowning and farce, they maintained the unbroken line from the players of Athens and Rome and were the professional an-

cestors of the movie stars and Broadway players of today. In spite of opposition and oppression they always found an audience of some kind because they brought entertainment and enjoyment, whether it was tragedy or farce, and eventually the Church, in its wisdom, softened its heart towards an art which was so influential. Christian doctrines, hard for peasants without the beginnings of education to grasp in their full significance, became easy to accept when acted out in dumb show or in the language of the people. So began the *Mysteries*, the dramatizations of incidents in Christ's ministry, the *Miracle Plays*, dealing with the lives of the saints, and the *Moralities* such as *Everyman*, wherein virtues and vices became real persons and characters in the plays.

The *Mysteries* started within the church buildings and were originally played entirely by priests, but they eventually attracted such large crowds that they were moved outside. Then the problem of seeing the actors became acute, so wagons or movable stages were built so that people in the back rows could have a reasonably good view. Gradually, secular actors were allowed to perform and from townspeople to professional actors was the next step. It took four centuries to prepare the ground for Shakespeare and Molière.

Before the Elizabethan theatre could come to flower, something more than one-act playlets (for the miracles and mysteries were little more than that) had to be available. With the decay of Greece and the fall of Rome even historians had written off those two great civilizations. But Greece was a sort of phoenix; she rose from the ashes of history to spread protective wings over the Renaissance, when the glories of Greece were re-discovered and drawn on for inspiration in the fields of architecture, painting and drama. The barriers were down; there was no longer any restriction on the subject matter of plays, and the lives of heroes, as well as of saints and martyrs, were available as material for the theatre.

Moreover, heroes were found to be sometimes ordinary men and women as well as kings and queens, and Shakespeare's predecessors deserve credit for laying some good foundations in public taste. Across the Channel, in France, the strolling players were making people laugh with pieces like *Pierre Patelin*, and in Italy the mummers of the *Commedia dell'Arte* troupes were brilliantly improvising on their own comic themes. In England the first effects of the Renaissance discoveries were exhibited in tragedies inspired by the reading of Roman plays rather than Greek, but Llyly, Marlowe and Greene were scholars profoundly influenced by their reading of the greater Greek plays.

We may presume that Shakespeare himself knew little Latin and less Greek, but he knew audiences and he learned much from the more academic writers who preceded him. And he had perhaps the most remarkable audience that any playwright ever had, the courtiers,

This is the first of a series of articles on Theatre Enjoyment prepared by Professor Pearson for readers of DRAMATICS. These articles are addressed primarily to those who may be designated as "theatre consumers." These articles will be reprinted in booklet form at the close of this school season. — EDITOR

merchants, soldiers, sailors and craftsmen of Elizabethan England. It may not be without significance that women were not allowed either on the stage or in the audience until after the Restoration.

It used to be supposed that Shakespeare got around the absence of scenery in his day by having little boys walk on carrying placards reading: "This is a wood" and so one. But there is no reason to believe that he or his audiences felt the need of such a device. The lines themselves describe the scene more vividly than any printed sign and perhaps they suited his purpose better than the elaborate mountings of the modern realistic theatre. There was something left to the imagination; Shakespearean audiences were not distracted by clever "props" and pretty colors in paint and lighting, but there is ample evidence that the costumes were rich and varied. Realism in the matter of dress was important because in the public theatres performances took place in broad daylight, even in rain, although many of the great plays were performed during the winters at the Blackfriars Theatre, a weatherproof building complete with roof and lighted by tapers and lanterns.

A great deal of the acting technique of those days was received from the strolling players and others who had played hither and thither between Athens and London over the centuries. Much new business and craft was undoubtedly invented by the men of Shakespeare's, Burbage's and Alleyn's companies. Again the father-to-son tradition has persisted. Much of the "business" used in any production of Shakespeare today can be traced to the original production and we can enjoy the feeling of being one with the unbroken line of traditional playing.

Not all the theatres of Elizabeth's day were public ones. There were many small private stages where masques and court dramas were presented for invited audiences, but few of the plays are remembered today. In France, very few years later, Molière played indoors and enjoyed the favor of the king and the court, yet his plays have survived

#### COMING EVENTS

A roll of Honor Thespians for the 1948-49 season based upon information sent to The National Thespian Society as of October 1 will appear in the November issue of DRAMATICS. The results of the 1948-49 Handbill Contest will also be announced in the November issue. — EDITOR

because they were of wide human appeal. Molière was clever enough to satirize the merchant class, not the courtiers, so when the courtier laughed the bourgeois had to keep silent and make no protest in public. Louis Fourteenth was a good friend to the theatre and his last gesture of affection for Molière was significant. As a sinful actor and playwright it was to be expected that Molière should have found some time to abjure his profession before dying. But the end came unexpectedly; Molière was stricken during a performance but played it out and then went home and died that night. Lacking administration of the last rites, he was refused Christian burial by the Archbishop of Paris, but King Louis intervened and, to the mingled horror and surprise of the city, this mere mummer was buried in consecrated ground.

The architecture of the theatre underwent great changes during the century following the death of Molière. Outdoor arenas were no longer deemed practical and theatre buildings went up all over Europe in which artists and architects made their experiments and eventually crystallized a style that has not changed very much up to the present day. Plays were affected by the new conditions of performance. There were no act-divisions in Shakespeare's play as written and played; those were added much later by Nicholas Rowe. But that was a hundred years afterwards, and by that time there was scenery and the beginnings of stage lighting. Also there were many more seats than in the Globe and the Fortune theatres. Great opera houses and city theatres began to rise and audiences increased in size. Actors and playwrights were still not quite respectable, but at least they were not hounded and forced to live under cover like criminals.

People have never stopped going to the theatre, whatever the conditions under which plays have been presented. It is a universal urge; some psychologists would have us believe it is more than "escape mechanism." But the enjoyment of theatre largely consists in its ability to lift us out of ourselves, not as escape but as inspiration. Actors in the days of ancient Greece wore high shoes to raise themselves up and look bigger, more like the gods they presented. In the same way a good actor makes himself, without using "lifts" or other extraneous aids, actually appear larger than life. We see ourselves in him, see ourselves great and grand enough to rise triumphant over petty troubles and everyday cares. We are of the stature of gods.

(The next article will deal with the types of plays which have, from ancient Greece to the present day, served as vehicles for the actor and provided enjoyment for the audience.)

## THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library  
New York 18, N. Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THIS summer, as during the several past, the most exciting activity in the New York theatre has taken place among the off-Broadway groups. Operating under trying conditions and on extremely limiting budgets, these valiant organizations produce a series of interesting scripts (new and old) and experiment with staff and techniques. Unfortunately, only the more intrepid theatregoers track down these productions. Though the playhouses are not too distantly removed from the central Times Square theatre district; they are equipped with a minimum of the little things which make for comfort.

Those of us who venture forth are almost always glad that we have done so. During the recent season a partial list of the items available off-Broadway would include: *Yes Is for a Very Young Man*, by Gertrude Stein, *The Private Life of the Master Race*, by Bertolt Brecht, *Out of the Picture*, by Louis MacNeice, *The Silver Tassie*, by Sean O'Casey, *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*, by Frederico Garcia-Lorca, *They Shall Not Die*, by John Wexley, *A Dream of Love*, by William Carlos Williams, and *The Father*, by August Strindberg. This is merely a cross-section of the productions. One does not find such variety in an entire season of Broadway activity.

This season, the major organizations in operation have been Interplayers, People's Drama, Off Broadway Inc., Studio 7, and We Present, Inc. The first of these has been drawing audiences to the smaller hall at Carnegie Hall. People's Drama has been operating in little-renovated church on West 41st Street. Off Broadway, Inc. and Studio 7 are in Greenwich Village at the Cherry Lane Theatre and the Provincetown Playhouse respectively. The final group on my list has been using the auditorium of the Hudson Guild, a settlement house on West 27th Street. The Greenwich Village playhouses have long been noted as resorts of the experimental theatre. Here the Theatre Guild (then known as the Washington Square Players) was born and the Provincetown Theatre made this its winter headquarters. It is traditional for fledgling groups to test themselves there. Off Broadway, Inc. and Studio 7 are following, then, in a great tradition of the American theatre.

### *They Shall Not Die*

The night we attended the People's Drama production of *They Shall Not Die*, a very enthusiastic audience was in attendance. The company is working against great odds in a former church. Little has been done to create playing space and almost nothing to hide the ecclesiastic architecture. The altar has been removed and a platform erected in its stead. Lights have been set up in all

possible places and, very wisely, the director has done with lights what he could not do with flats and curtains. Mr. Wexley's drama, based upon the famous Scottsboro Case and written in the white heat of that moment, is excellently adaptable to this type of staging. It is almost documentary drama. The scenes are short and incisive. The company derived the fullest effect from the play through the production and the sincerity of the acting. It would be unfair in this instance to single out individuals, for this was ensemble acting of the best kind. All were credible, forceful and exhibiting the type of technique which obscures technique.

### *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*

At Studio 7 we enjoyed still a different type of evening. The Lorca farce, *The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife*, is a folk-comedy. It has a simplicity and a joy which is alien to the type of play written by John Wexley. It is designed to be amusing . . . to make us laugh at our own foibles by seeing those of our neighbors — and the production did just that. The play was preceded by a one-act trick of Strindberg's, *The Stronger*, which is played almost entirely by two women. One of the ladies does all the talking; the other all the listening. The lady of the title is the second of the two characters. It is an interesting acting and playwriting exercise.

It is hoped that the members of these groups will enjoy working for New York audiences. They lend to the local theatre an experimental spirit which is otherwise only noticeable through its absence. Their informality and their contagious joy in their work and their daring bring qualities which many of the established theatre people lack. Just because New York had become the theatre capital of the country, such groups had become afraid to work here. Their presence is acutely needed. Let us hope they continue to flourish in our midst.

### *South Pacific*

In the spring a new musical opened which I was unable to review for DRAMATICS' readers. This was the new Richard Rodgers — Oscar Hammerstein, II work, *South Pacific*. This team has exerted a greater effect upon American musical theatre than any other in a very long time. Beginning with their now world famous *Oklahoma*, they have continued to beat a new path. With their latest work they have taken a great stride forward. For *Oklahoma* they turned to a fairly recent bit of American drama — Lynn Rigg's *Green Grow the Lilacs*. With this base they turned out a fresh musical expression which com-

bined the lilt and the gayety of modern musical comedy with period local history. To this was added liberal touches of ballet. The result is too well known to describe.

They next attempted something a bit more difficult. Turning to Ferenc Molnar's *Liliom*, they found the seed of *Carousel*. They transposed the middle European locale to New Bedford of the last century and created a great folk opera. The score for this production was, many of us feel, the greatest yet created by this gifted pair. For *Allegro*, they wrote an original book and attempted a vastly more serious theme. Many of the audience, and even of the critical fraternity, declared this was not a musical. (It reminds one somewhat of the disagreements over the plays of Bernard Shaw, which many of the critics refused to treat as drama).

**SOUTH PACIFIC** may prove to be the most popular work of the Messrs. Rodgers and Hammerstein. James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize winning collection of short stories, **TALES OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC**, is a collection of accounts of activities in that part of the world during World War II. In their selection and adaptation of sections of Mr. Michener's work the authors have been assisted by Joshua Logan, who also staged the production.

The main theme of the musical is the romance between Ensign Nellie Forbush, the Navy Nurse from Little Rock, and Emile De Becque, the trader. This is, however, merely the connecting thread which ties together the multiple narratives of the play. These include the activities of Bloody Mary, the omnipresent provider of everything to the men of the naval station; the love story of Lt. Cable and the native girl, Liat; the exploits of Luther Billis.

No summary of the plot can convey the power and the charm of *South Pacific*. Mr. Rodgers' score is of foremost importance. Many of the numbers have already been heard on the nation's radios and phonographs; others (those more indigenous to the show but no less lovely) have been played less frequently. *Oklahoma*, with its choreography by Agnes De Mille, set ballet as a necessary component of musical production. With *South Pacific*, we have swung full circle — there is no choreographer listed among the contributors. What dancing there is comes within the scope of the action and is not appended to it.

Everyone involved does excellently but special mention must be made of Mary Martin and Ezio Pinza in the leading roles. They are superb. Miss Martin is well beloved by musical audiences. Mr. Pinza has hitherto been seen only on the opera and concert stage. If his playing be an accurate indication, he is enjoying the switch as much as we. Juanita Hall as Bloody Mary must be given special commendation. Her acting and her singing of "Bali Ha'i" and "Happy Talk" are high points in the proceedings. Other roles are

Just off the Press

**HANDBOOK FOR CHILDREN'S THEATRE DIRECTORS.** This handbook has been prepared with the cooperation of the Association of Junior Leagues of America and the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association. Edited by Louise C. Horton. Contains the following articles: "Children's Theatre, an Introduction" by Louise C. Horton; "Organizational Problems in Children's Theatre" by Virginia Lee Comer; "Purposes of Children's Theatre Plays" by Kenneth L. Graham; "Choosing the Children's Theatre Play" by Burdette Fitzgerald; "Directing the Children's Theatre Play" by William Ireland Duncan; "Rehearsal Techniques" by Charlotte B. Chorpennich; "The Children's Theatre Audience" by Albert O. Mitchell. Also contains a list of recommended full-length children's plays. Price, \$0.60

**THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY**  
College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, O.

enacted by William Tabbert, Bettis St. John, Myron McCormick, Harvey Stephens and Martin Wolfson. The advance sale is a hearty one, but *SOUTH PACIFIC* is a show worth waiting months to see.

*Miss Liberty*

Another musical has opened more recently, but it has not won the commendation bestowed upon *South Pacific*. With a book by Robert E. Sherwood and a score by Irving Berlin, *Miss Liberty* seemed a certain winner. My own review shall have to be deferred until a later date, but most of those who have seen it have registered disappointment. The action of the piece concerns the importation of the Statue of Liberty and the rivalry between two of the New York newspapers. Eddie Albert, Mary McCarty, Allyn McLerie, Ethel Griffies and Philip Bourneuf are among those involved. Jerome Robbins designed and staged the choreography.

Another of the late season arrivals — and a speedy departure — was *Gayden* by Mignon and Robert McLaughlin. A grisly tale of mother love and filial erring, this little opus wasted the talents of Fay Bainter, who chose this to end an almost four year absence from the local boards.

*Detective Story*

The fairly inactive summer gives one an excellent opportunity to catch up on some of the season's omissions. I caught Sidney Kingsley's *Detective Story* during the dog days and report in favor. The playwright has turned his photographically accurate pen to depiction of happenings in one of New York's precinct police stations. As in *Dead End* and *Men in White*, Mr. Kingsley probes beneath the surface happenings of his locale. He examines the motivations and the backgrounds of his characters. He has the quality that lesser craftsmen so often lack — the ability to show the reason for the action of his characters in addition to the actions themselves. We seem to live more intimately

and fully with the people who go through the squad room than with the characters of most plays.

**DETECTIVE STORY** has been produced by two expert dramatists on their own — Lindsay and Russel Crouse. Ralph Bellamy is playing the leading role and, though Meg Mundy appeared when the play opened, Anne Burr is now enacting the role of Mrs. McLeod. The production has been staged by the author. Boris Aronson designed the single setting.

*Vaudeville*

Though slightly outside the range of legitimate theatre; a development in the entertainment life of Broadway has taken place which I must touch upon. That is the reopening of the Palace as a vaudeville house. In its heyday (which lasted more than most such) the Palace was the foremost vaudeville house of the United States. It was the ambition of the two-a-day troupers to play the Palace. Its bills were made up of the best talent which the world could provide. As the talking picture grabbed up one after another of the performers, and radio most of the rest, those responsible for the booking found their task increasingly difficult. Eventually, the Palace was forced to adopt an all-film policy. For many years Loew's State, two blocks south of the Palace on the Great White Way, carried on a film-and-vaudeville policy. A little over a year ago, this theatre, too, was forced to abandon the stage shows.

Many of us have been loudly lamenting its demise. Our combined groans eventually attracted the ears of the bookers of our entertainment. These ears were cocked slightly in our direction. Then, with the success on television of Milton Berle (and others) using their old vaudeville material in an almost pure form; those in the know acceded to the requests. Several weeks ago, vaudeville once again lit up the Palace stage. It is still teamed with film fare (and very weak fare up to the present) but it is real live vaudeville. It is not the "stage show" made popular in the larger movie palaces but the variety which has been too long lacking.

The booking agent is still faced with problems. The movies, radio and television still claim much of his best talent. A new crop of vaudeville personalities must be trained before the palace can boast the kind of show it once exhibited. A wonderful job is being done. Already a small circuit has been arranged to insure the actor more than a single week's employment. Vaudeville in this country has been reborn.

It is such examples as this that prove the great hold of the theatre upon people. No substitutes can replace the pleasure derived from watching great performers at work on a stage before us. This is not to minimize the other entertainment arts. I merely iterate that the stage has a quality which no other form can claim. It is this quality which allows the theatre to exist in the face of overwhelming odds and which will always keep a spark alive.

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## THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Northeastern State College,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

## STAGING MY SISTER EILEEN

By JACK PALANGIO

Head of Drama-Speech Department, Iowa Wesleyan College,  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

MY SISTER EILEEN, a comedy in three acts, by Joseph A. Fields and Jerome Chodakov. 21 m. 6 w. extras as desired, one interior. Royalty \$50. Dramatists Play Service Inc., 6 East 39th Street, New York, N. Y.

### Suitability

"This is a sure-fire hit!"

Such is my reply to teachers everywhere in this vicinity who are asking for a play strong enough to carry itself and a cast of youngsters who are trying to learn some of the 'angles'. The Broadway version, to be sure, has a few adult lines which, for some groups, might be objectionable. The authors, aware of this possibility, have written and included in the script, substitute lines which in no way impair the efficacy of the play or plot. *My Sister Eileen* is not a 'message' play. It is just an evening of rollicking entertainment for the spectator as well as for the actor.

### Plot

The late thirties, like the late twenties and forties before and after them, brought to New York, that city of eternal opportunity, Eileen and Ruth Sherwood who were determined that one day Columbus, Ohio, would say, "Why the Sherwood girls were born and raised here."

It is early evening when we see them enter the basement apartment advertised for rent by Mr. Appopolous. Ruth, the elder, and the brain of the duo, after a quick glimpse at the shoddy rooms is for continuing the search. But Eileen, the alluring, curvaceous, and vivacious Eileen, is tired. She wants to stay, especially after Mr. Appopolous assures them, in his nondescript dialect, that

if they are not satisfied at the end of one month he will gladly return in full, the rent they will have paid. And so — they stay. The apartment, as Mr. Appopolous reassured his tenants, has one very exciting feature — he was very modest — the large dormer window which faced the street. Life, and all that make it interesting or maddening, passed by. Fighting kids, inebriates, dogs, cats, the policeman on the beat and the myriad assortment of characters unique to Greenwich Village, all made a contribution to the constantly flowing stream of life that passed by "the exciting dormer window."

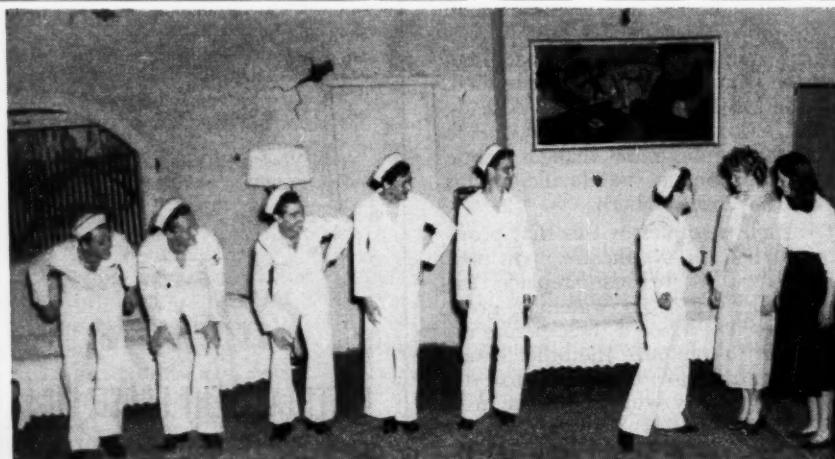
Mr. Appopolous neglected to say that at night the light from the nearby lamp streamed "in." Through the back door, long in need of the daily-promised new lock, pass several men in search of Violet, a former tenant and attendant to men burdened with heavy hearts. Their hungry eyes and arms reach out for the glamorous Eileen.

Such adventures with predatory males, including some young Brazilian naval officers, create scenes of merriment and humor that will tickle and delight even the most calloused. Add to this coterie the recurrent blasting sounds which threaten to turn into debris, the troglodyte apartment, and you have laughter enough for a month of Sundays.

It takes the girls a month to catch on to things. But by this time, they are out of funds and about ready to go back to Columbus, Ohio, from whence came Mr. Sherwood, the girls' father to see how they were doing. Then in quick order, while Father is getting bus tickets, Ruth sells a story, gets a job, and finds romance. Jubilantly, they sign a lease, for the same apartment — with venetian blinds — for six months. Eileen is to have her chance.

### Casting

Though the play is strong enough to carry itself, the director must exercise



Scene from the production of *My Sister Eileen* given by the Drama-Speech Department, Iowa Wesleyan College, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

### MR. PALANGIO

Jack Palangio is director of the College Civic Theatre in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, home of Iowa Wesleyan College. This group holds the distinction of having the largest per-capita membership of any community in the country with well over a thousand members in a town of around 5000.

Mr. Palangio has both his B.A. and his M.A. degrees from the University of Denver. He also holds the Th. M. from Iliff School of Theology. He is in charge of speech and drama at Iowa Wesleyan College.

great care in the selection of his characters. It would be well to read the play a half-dozen times to set them clearly in mind. The man who plays the part of Mr. Appopolous should be portly and have a rather flexible voice and some facility with dialect. The need for "timing" with this character is especially great. Eileen, the younger of the sisters should be pretty, blonde, winsome, and vivacious so as to lend character to her scenes with would-be lovers. Ruth, the elder sister, need not be entirely without attractiveness. She should be bigger.

The "Wreck," the ubiquitous football player, should be big and seem capable of throwing a man out of the apartment with ease. The Janitor, Jensen, should be good at pantomime since he is on stage quite frequently, and, usually, without lines. Mr. Baker, who finds more than a literary interest in Ruth, should be soft-spoken, and taller than she.

Since the naval cadets are Latins it would be well to make the selection from the darker complexioned boys.

### Direction

In directing a play there is no substitute for careful, intelligent planning before rehearsals begin. Things move entirely too fast in this play for the inspirational director. Careful attention must be given to mass organization and composition to create good stage pictures. Directions in the script are, as usual, meager. And, since they are written with the set in mind which appears in the back of the script, they are too often worthless. Too few schools have facilities adequate to meet the need of the recommended set. However, the play is easy to stage if the director will work out in advance, his blocking and the placement of his actors and actresses. Special care will have to be given to the dance sequence particularly.

### Rehearsals

The question, How long should you rehearse a play? is like asking, How long should a man's legs be? A man's legs should be long enough to enable him to run gracefully. A play should be rehearsed until it runs smoothly.

## Costumes

Costumes are negligible. The script calls for eight. Six for the naval cadets and those of the Russian doorman, and Ruth's Okay chewing gum suit. For the naval cadets we borrowed six suits of whites from boys who had been in the U. S. Navy. To change them, we added three stripes of royal blue binding to the edge of the collar, and to the brim of the hat, one. These were basted on.

For Ruth's suit, we made from royal blue muslin, a short ruffled skirt of mid-thigh length. She wore a conventional white blouse. A collarless cape, made of blue muslin on one side, and red muslin on the other, was thrown over her shoulders. Her hat, fashioned in bell-hop style, was made of cardboard and covered with muslin, creating an altogether pleasing effect.

For the Russian, we bought a pattern for Russian pajamas. These were made of black and red muslin. The shirt draped over the trousers and was drawn together with a wide black patent-leather belt. He wore leather calf-length boots. His hat, like Ruth's, was made of cardboard and muslin. A few plumes stiched to the front gave it the final touch.

For the balance of the cast, no special costumes are needed. Changes are suggested in the script.

## Make-up

No special comments are needed under this heading save one. **GO EASY ON MAKE-UP!** Unless you are professionally proficient in the application of make-up, Johnny Jones will leave your dressing room looking as though he were ready to break into an Apache war-dance. Steer clear of heavy foundation and thick lines. A good slogan to remember is, "A little goes a long way." No one in this cast needs elaborate make-up.

## Publicity

If it is worth doing, it is worth talking about. Newspaper advertising is usually expensive. In lieu of this, try the following: distribute handbills not sooner than three days before opening night. Every school has an art devotee who can turn out a good looking bulletin for mimeographing. Organize, in communities with unlimited telephone call rates, a telephone brigade. Give each member of the brigade a list of names and numbers. The phone conversation maybe no more than this. "Mrs. ...., this is the .... High School calling to remind you that on .... at .... o'clock in the evening we are presenting 'MY SISTER EILEEN.' We're sure you don't want to miss it. Goodbye." This is without question the cheapest and most direct method of advertising. It gets results, too!

## Budget

Royalty (we gave three performances)	\$100.00
Scripts	8.50
Paint	25.50
Costumes (muslin and binding)	10.50
Advertising, printing, programs	51.50
Properties	2.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$198.50</b>

(Flats, lumber, other incidentals for setting, were on hand. We bought nothing new.)

November issue: **ALICE-SIT-BY-THE-FIRE**

## The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1949-50 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

## "BREAKFAST WITH BURROWS (HE GETS UP LATE)"

(CBS — 9:30 to 10 p. m. — EDT — Friday)

THEY laughed when Abe Burrows sat down to play the piano at private parties in Hollywood and New York.

The laughter grew even louder when Burrows came through with song and spiel in masterful style.

Satire, one of the many feathers in Burrow's cap of mirth, tickled the ribs of some of the most outstanding comic bodies in the country — Jack Benny, Fred Allen, S. J. Perelman, Groucho Marx, Danny Kaye, Marc Connally, and the late Robert Benchly.

Burrows got to be known as the comedian's comedian and the wit's wit.

So the funnyman picked up his act and carried it out under his hat to radio. Again they laughed when Abe Burrows sat down to play. This time they were the 99,000,000 weekly Columbia Broadcasting System listeners who caught his witty ditties, done in frog's croak.

Judging from recent performances, Abe Burrows is the man to watch in this season's parade of radio comedians. Burrows is ahead of many of the others in his trade because he writes his own material and so knows exactly what the author had in mind when he wrote a certain line. He knows just the right inflection to give a key word, just the right moment to throw something away.

Mr. Scharer's article for this month was prepared in collaboration with S. I. Mills of New York University. — EDITOR

Burrows has much more coherent, alert material than the just-average jester. He plays what a baseball manager would call "heads-up" ball — he knows what's going on in the world and much of his humor is based on current topics. In this way he may be likened to Henry Morgan. In its forced rhyme, his poetry reminds the listener of Ogden Nash. Yet this comedian is not a plagiarist, but rather a composite. He embodies the best of many of the established entertainers without imitating them.

**BREAKFAST WITH BURROWS** does not achieve moments of high hilarity as often as some of the best comedy shows but neither does it bore you with five minutes of poor material for every good laugh. Don't get the idea that **BREAKFAST WITH BURROWS** is flat, colorless and completely even-paced. That would make for a dull program indeed. Burrows is almost always humorous and always interesting.

Burrow's show has plenty of movement and is well paced. It moves forward all the time. But it moves primarily because the extra matter, the stuff that doesn't count, is pared away. Then there is less of the sparring, more of getting directly to the point. Ordinarily these quick changes would give one the impression of a show that does not flow smoothly; but this is not a drama where transition has to be worked over and over until it is as even as a piece of glass. This is comedy and the idea is to get to the point as quickly as possible and make the telling thrust. And if the comedy is good, some of that jerkiness — most of it — disappears because the listener does not have time to realize that the change was not a smooth one. Of course, comedians are aware of this ability to overcome their faults and try to take advantage of the weapon. The result is a performance that is spotty, a verbal bludgeoning of the audience. Sure, Burrows is spotty at times, but not often. His momentary lags are readily forgiven.

The rest of the Burrows retinue helps make up a rounded performance. Doro Merande, as the maid Marilyn, is enough like a hovering old-maid-aunt to make her part of the family, rather than just a bothersome maid. The other regular members of the cast are not supposed to be comedians and so their feeble gestures in that field can be



Abe Burrows, song-and-spiel comedian at work at CBS.

quickly dismissed. True, their names are humorous, like Milton De Lugg and Lynn Duddy, but funny names don't make funny people. They are capable as accordianist-orchestra leader and vocal group leader respectively and make their contributions to the performance.

The format of the program is something like this . . . The announcer, like someone doing a chore disdainfully, introduces Burrows, who is sitting at his breakfast table. After a few moments of patter about many subjects, ranging from jokes about himself to quips on current events, the maid is called in to serve breakfast. Remarks are made about the guest star, who will appear shortly. Burrows then sings one of those songs for which he is fast becoming famous. A few more jokes and it is time for a number by the vocal group. Then comes the guest star, who is kept in front of the audience for about ten minutes.

Of course there are minor deviations from week to week, but they are comparatively unimportant. What counts is that the guest has good lines and does not seem like a piece of excess baggage. He fits into the overall picture of congeniality and ease.

Ease is one of the show's keynotes. There is an informality and lack of strain such as most other comedy stanzas fail to attain. It is this informality that makes the Burrows show something worth hearing. Even in the moments of transition, there doesn't seem to be an embarrassed silence.

There are shortcomings, true. Like other comedians, Burrows has his share of poor programs; and when they are bad, they are rotten. One cannot expect perfection from any person. Just remember that when Burrows is good — which is most of the time — he is terrific.

Born in New York City, December 18, 1910, Abe Burrows moved from Manhattan to the Bronx to Brooklyn. He attended City College and New York University, where he studied accounting on his mother's insistence that he amount to something. Then he became a bank runner, Wall Street Board boy, accountant, and salesman of maple syrup, wall paper, and woven labels to garment manufacturers, to whom he was known as "Gags and Tags" and "Abel the Label Man."

The life-can-be-dull department ended in 1938 when Burrows sold a radio script, in collaboration with Frank Gaylen, to comedian Eddie Garr, who was guesting on the Rudy Vallee show. The team of Burrows and Gaylen aided, assisted, and abetted Ed Gardner in concocting the CBS program, "This Is New York," on which the character of

#### DRAMA CLINICS

OVER three hundred colleges and universities throughout the country have been invited by The National Thespian Society to sponsor one-day drama clinics for the purpose of raising standards of dramatic work among our public and private high schools. Invitations were issued early in September.

If your high school dramatics students are interested in participating in one of these events, write at once to the colleges and universities nearest you, suggesting that a drama clinic be arranged for this season. Address your letter to the "Director of Dramatics," and state that full particulars concerning the organization of a drama clinic may be obtained free of charge by writing to The National Thespian Society.

Among the first to announce plans for drama clinics are:

Department of Speech, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Date of Clinic: November 19.

Community Drama Service, Bowling Green, Ohio, University.

Date of Clinic: October 22.

A directory of drama clinics announced as of October 1 will appear in the November issue of *Dramatics*.

Archie was created. Archie became head man of "Duffy's Tavern," and Burrows head writer for same. Burrows, the scribbler, was in.

Honest Abe went to Hollywood in 1939, wrote for "Duffy's Tavern," "Star Theater," Rudy Vallee, Dinah Shore, and Joan Davis. He also had a stint as scenario writer for Paramount Pictures.

To hear Burrows tell it, his start as a full-time wit was a casual thing. He was sitting around in Hollywood with three fellows. One was from Paris, another from London, and the third from Pocatello, Idaho. "Where are you from?" they asked Burrows.

"I'm from Brooklyn," I said, and that's how I got a reputation as a wit."

He liked kidding the slushy sentiment of phony Tin Pan Alley tunes, and pounded out satirical ditties for the edification of his friends. One of his buddies, Frank Loesser, songsmit of such hits as "A Slow Boat to China" and "My Darling," encouraged Burrows' brash take-offs on popular song writing, with the result that Abe created many fluff-stuffed classics.

Among the Burrows' songs that made hysteria are "The Girl With the Three Blue Eyes," "Morning Becomes Electra,

Educational Theatre Journal DRAMATICS magazine welcomes the appearance of the EDUCATIONAL THEATRE JOURNAL under the sponsorship of the American Educational Theatre Association. The first number of the new theatre publication, issued on a quarterly basis, is promised for the month of October. Dr. Bernard Hewitt of the Drama Department of the University of Illinois is the editor. Those interested in subscribing for the Journal should write to the AETA office, Department of Speech, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. — EDITOR

But You Look Better At Night," "Leave Us Face It, We're in Love," "Click, Click, Rap, Rap, Rap, You're Playing Ping Pong With My Heart," "I've Got a Girl in Calico Who's Dying for a Mink," "Darling, Why Shouldn't You Look Well Fed, 'Cause You Ate a Hunk of My Heart," and "Oh, How We Danced on the Night We Were Wed, I Needed a Wife Like a Hole in the Head."

Typical of the songs, perhaps, is the one entitled "I'm Walking Down Memory Lane Without a Single Thing on My Mind." A choice snatch of the lyrics goes:

Some folks remember their mothers,  
And others their girl friends behind,  
But I am strol ing down Memory Lane  
Without a Cockeyed thing on my mind.

"All of a sudden, to my horror," says Burrows, "I find myself that dreadful thing called the life of the party. People at these outings used to ask me why I didn't perform professionally, and I'd explain how I wanted to be dignified and a writer. But when they offered me a radio contract, after Joan Davis let me give a show for her studio audience, I said 'Dignity, Shmignity,' and signed up in two seconds."

The Joan Davis tryout, in the spring of 1947, was the culmination of Burrow's conviction that he might be able to render his own material himself with better effect than others. He got up on the stage, and announced "I'm a singer." The audience laughed itself silly at that one — if you heard his voice you would too — and Burrows the comedian knew he was in.

Many observers have noted Burrows' kidding of Tin Pan Alley, plot cliches, movie travesties, and musical comedies. One of his funniest satires is the Norman Corwin-type radio narration, which Corwin himself enjoyed immensely. In a skit he named "James Aberdjan, Armenian," Burrows sounded off in this manner; "As American as apple pie . . . the crunch of a hot dog when you walk on it on a cold day . . . the smack of a wet cigar when it hits you across the face . . . the rattle of cement when you're in the mixer."

One of the charming virtues, and perhaps the most charming virtue, of the comedian, however, is that he kids himself. "Am I fat?" he asks huskily. "Am I sloppy? Am I bald? Well, my answer is yes!"

His inimitable voice is almost indescribable. He once had an attack of laryngitis, and after taking several treatments, he told the doctor that his voice was all right again. The doctor asked: "How do you tell?" However, Mary McSkimming, writing in the magazine "Script," caught the flavor of the Burrows voice with these words: "In about Nelson Eddy's key, with Andy Devine's tonal purity, and the diction of Ed Gardner's Archie. His delivery is as smooth and effortless as that of a hippopotamus having twins."

## THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,  
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1949-50 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

## COME TO THE STABLE AND FATHER WAS A FULLBACK

THE 20th Century-Fox Studio is releasing two films which promise to have wide appeal to young people, as well as to family groups. While both are perhaps uneven in production and certainly fall short of the "excellent" category, each provides a good quality of entertainment, and a simple story told with a full order of humor and comedy.

### Come to the Stable

*Come to the Stable* is the better of the two and will have the larger family response. A kind of feminine *Going My Way*, the tale is the third of its kind to be turned out within recent years. *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's* set the pattern followed in this newest film of what may become an unending series.

The story tells of the successful attempt of Sister Margaret (Loretta Young) and Sister Scolastica (Celeste Holm), members of the Order of Holy Endeavor who hail from France, to establish a children's hospital in the United States. That they have no money, or advance promises of assistance, in no way deters them. While visiting New England near a country village appropriately named Bethlehem, their first stopping point is an artist's studio that has been converted from an old stable. The famous and eccentric artist, Amelia Potts (Elsa Lanchester) has painted many religious subjects, reproductions of which the Sisters have admired in Europe. A feeling of kinship is quickly established. When the artist shows the Sisters some of her recent canvases the nuns are attracted by one that depicts a gently sloping hill adjoining the stable. The hill at once becomes their objective as the site for their projected charity hospital.

With what may appear to be too great facility, the Sisters accomplish their mission within a few weeks. The land they must acquire belongs to the wealthy head of a big gambling syndicate (played by Thomas Gomez). The unethical man's heart is melted by the discovery that the Sisters, who served throughout the recent war, were stationed near Rouen where his only son was lost in a battle. The Sisters leave the gambler's New York office with the deed to the property.

A second major hurdle — the raising of sufficient money to purchase an abandoned factory as a temporary hospital near the property — is overcome

by a second set of happy circumstances: a friendly composer (played by Hugh Marlowe) learns that his latest composition, which promises to be a hit, was unconsciously inspired by an old melody he had heard sung by the nuns near Villers, France. He pays his debt of gratitude by contributing the balance of the money needed to purchase the deserted factory. He can easily afford it, so goes the story, since he just completed a ten-week stint of composing for a major Hollywood studio.

### Credits

The original story for *Come to the Stable* was written by Clare Booth Luce. Director Henry Koster had previously directed such films as *The Bishop's Wife* and *The Luck of the Irish*. Producer Samuel G. Engel was responsible for *Sitting Pretty* and *Mr. Belvedere Goes to College*, and the contrasting realistic drama, *Street With No Name*.

Loretta Young continues to add to her list of varied roles undertaken since she received an Academy Award for her part in *The Farmer's Daughter*. In succession she appeared in the four box office hits: *The Bishop's Wife*, *Rachel and the Stranger*, *The Accused*, and

*Mother Is a Freshman*. She specifically requested the role of Sister Margaret in *Come to the Stable*.

It's a far cry from Celeste Holm's *Ado Annie* of *Oklahoma!* to her Sister Scolastica. An Academy Award Winner for her work in *Gentlemen's Agreement*, Miss Holm demonstrates in *Come to the Stable*, one more facet of her acting talent. Many fans, however, may be anxious to see her tackle more challenging roles in the future.

Elsa Lanchester's characterization of the artist is the film's major credit. One of Hollywood's busiest comedienne, she continues to work in films — occasionally two at a time — while doing her nightly acts in the famous Turnabout Theatre.

### Production Notes

Three major sets served the crews who filmed *Come to the Stable*. The first presents snowy New England fields and hills, birch trees with frosty branches, sycamores heavy with snow, a red barn on a stony snow-covered ledge, an artist's stone cottage white in the sunshine, and in the foreground a typical barnyard scene. Second of the large exteriors enabled cameramen to focus from any point on its circumference. The enormous cyclorama representing sky and landscape covered more than 60,000 square feet. Third major setting was a location, the eight-acre Henry Fonda estate at Brentwood, California.

Alfred Newman, musical director at 20th Century-Fox, collaborated with Mack Gordon to produce the hit song of the show, *THROUGH A LONG AND SLEEPLESS NIGHT*. A melody patterned after a medieval chant in the Gregorian manner was first written, to serve as the chant sung by the Sisters. The melody was then adapted to the popular pattern.



Fred MacMurray, Maureen O'Hara, Natalie Wood, and Betty Lynn in a scene from the new motion picture, *Father Was A Fullback*, a 20th Century-Fox Production.

#### ADVICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Change of address shou'd be promptly reported to DRAMATICS magazine, since the post office does not forward second-class matter. The old address, as well as the new should be reported. The new address should be complete, giving full street address, box number, route number, and zone number in the case of large cities.

At least six weeks should be allowed for the change of address to become effective. Subscribers should claim the current issue at their old addresses.

—EDITOR

#### Father Was a Fullback

*Mr. Belvedere Goes to College, Mother Is a Freshman*, and now *Father Was a Fullback*. Not sequels, but definitely of a family. Clifford Goldsmith's play, *Mr. Cooper's Left Hand*, inspired the screen version. Fairly adept handling of comedy situations in the script present Fred MacMurray continuous opportunities for his comic talents. Screen treatment for "Father" was by the same collaborators, Mary Loos and Richard Sale, who were responsible for the other two campus films.

MacMurray plays a coach whose team has such a dismal season that the alumni are after his scalp. He has problems at home as well with an adolescent daughter who, at the boy-crazy stage, has a deplorably low Hooper rating with her high school chums. Father's efforts to right things both at school and at home are equally disastrous, for a while.

Maureen O'Hara performs acceptably as an attractive wife, and Betty Lynn — the bobby sox baby-sitter of *Sitting Pretty* — makes a delightful adolescent problem. Natalie Wood (the child who didn't believe in Santa Claus in *The Miracle on 34th Street*), Rudy Valee, and Thelma Ritter (Sadie of *A Letter to Three Wives*) are in the supporting cast.

This is MacMurray's 51st film since he attracted attention as Claudette Colbert's leading man in *THE GILDED LILY* a dozen years ago. One of the fortunate players who have not become completely "typed" for roles, he remains one of Hollywood's relatively "normal" laborers — a happily married man who seldom talks shop and who rarely attends the screen colony's social functions.

Maureen O'Hara, after a series of costume dramas, makes her third comedy appearance in two years. *Miracle on 34th Street* and *Sitting Pretty* were the other two. Miss O'Hara is following a precedent set by several other screen actresses, that of establishing an independent business on the side. Her choice is the dress shop business. Her first was opened up almost a year to the day prior to the beginning of shooting on "Father." It showed at that time a comfortable profit. She started the second a few days before production ended. Her goal is one a year until she has six in operation.

## DRAMA FOR CHILDREN

By LOUISE C. HORTON

1751 Webb # 205  
Detroit 6, Michigan

This Department has for its purpose the advancement of the Children's Theatre Movement in America. Directors and teachers are urged to report to Miss Horton, for publication in this Department, news of their productions and other significant projects.

#### Report of the Annual National Children's Theatre Conference Held at Hunter College and the Belmont-Plaza Hotel, New York City, August 29 Through September 2.

THE raising of standards was the theme of the conference. The key-note was struck in the opening speech by Mrs. Burdette Fitzgerald, Oakland, California, present National Chairman of the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association, when she stressed the challenging and frightening fact that we, as children's theatre workers, have "an overpowering tool in our hands." Her admonition to us to know that tool, to understand what we are doing with it, and to use it wisely, opened up a view of the tremendous necessity for raising and holding high our standards in every phase of children's theatre.

Margo Jones, representing ANTA which invited the Conference to New York, was guest speaker at the opening meeting. She reiterated Mrs. Fitzgerald's remarks on the importance of good theatre for children. As a director in the commercial theatre, Miss Jones is audience-conscious and realizes the value of teaching theatre to the young so that they may develop into intelligent, theatre-wise audiences of the future. She, too, emphasized the importance of keeping standards high and also spoke of the widespread awakening to children's theatre's importance across the country among both laymen and professionals. She pointed out that leading dramatists may soon discover the great satisfaction in writing a play for children. The speaker appreciated the power of children's theatre as a tool in the hands of educators and artists.

In keeping with the theme of the conference and the growing national interest in theatre for young people, Professor C. R. Kase, Chairman of the AETA Committee on relations with UNESCO and the ITI, explained ANTA's ideals and led a discussion on the National Theatre Assembly to be held January 13, 1950, in Washington, D. C., sponsored by ANTA. Professor Kase pointed out that children's theatre has the biggest potential audience of any theatre interest in the country, and that it is of tremendous importance to the whole theatre movement, and as such, must have proper representation at the national theatre assembly. He explained that the country has been divided into several regions and there would be appointed a temporary chairman for each region until representatives of all theatres in that section can be brought together and elect a regular chairman. The purpose will be to record the key theatre ideas in each section preceding the assembly.

Professor Kase also brought attention to the fact that during the month of March, 1950, every school, college, university and community theatre in the country is planning to present a play, plays, or pageant, the main theme of which shall reflect the UNESCO idea, the promotion of international understanding.

The afternoon meeting of Monday, August 29, the psychological aspects of children's theatre, struck the first note for the raising of standards in theatre with children, in creative dramatics. The speakers were four experts on child psychology.

Dr. Arnold Gesell from Yale University spoke on the drama as a means of developing the child. He pointed out how the normal child naturally develops in this way from early infancy. He also stressed the necessity for leaders in this work to democratize the movement.

Dr. Rudolph Wittenberg, New School of Social Research, New York City, spoke of group-dynamics, of making adjustments. He emphasized that the person is the thing, and that the leader's purpose and the group's purpose should be one and the same thing and that unfortunately they often are not.

Dr. Eduard C. Lindeman, New York School of Social Work, spoke on drama in education, but underlined specifically the value of drama as the most effective way to teach understanding, morals, and beauty.

Lynn Adams, on the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, talked on drama in reference to the community, of building mental health in youth through drama. He said: There is a readiness to accept the idea of children's theatre and . . . a broad receptivity to creative arts. The child's imagination is something important that must be developed. Mr. Adams spoke of community relations, rather than public relations.

Tuesday morning the first specific note for the raising of standards in theatre for children, in formal theatre, was struck in the meeting on Style in the Theatre. Speakers were Frank Bevan from Yale University, and Sam Leve, Lighting Consultant on *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, which the conference delegates attended Monday evening.

Mr. Bevan's talk concentrated on an analysis of that elusive quality of good production: style. He discussed several inherent qualities of style.

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He spoke of color, line, and texture as having power in themselves, an emotional dominance that can condition an audience into the reaction which the director wants. There is no style without unity, Mr. Bevan said, a single point of view for the entire production. Theatrical style is also a theatrical attitude of mind, which strives to achieve a heightened effect. Mr. Bevan believes that the director and designer have an obligation to create that heightened effect and to maintain an air of mystery and excitement in theatre.

A scheme of production is arrived at by considering type of play, language of the play, mood, number of scenes and how they can be changed, kind of theatre, budget, personnel, etc.

Sam Leve spoke of the designer as an assistant to the playwright. He must help the director to interpret the play and design the set so that the director can move his actors about to the play's best advantage. It should be collaboration: playwright — director — designer.

At the meeting on New Children's Theatre Scripts the conference delegates were privileged to hear from the dean of children's playwrights, Charlotte Chorpenning from the Goodman Memorial Theatre in Chicago. Mrs. Chorpenning was chairman and principal speaker of the program. She gave as the key to the writing of good children's theatre scripts, the understanding of the child audience. This well-known director-playwright has given many

years to the study of child audiences in relation to playwriting and knows whereof she speaks.

The control of the audience comes from the other side of the footlights, i. e. from the stage. That this is for the most part true can hardly be denied by anyone who has ever honestly worked with and for a child audience. Of course, the size of the audience, its mental level, the size of the stage, its equipment, etc., all contribute to the effect of any performance as a whole.

In a good play:

1. There must be a character with whom the audience can identify.
2. Identity with that character must never stop.
3. Make sure that the experience as a whole is worth having.
4. Make sure these fundamental experiences are in the children's own terms.
5. Provide physical relaxation (such as laughing, etc.) without stopping the story.

While Miss Horton devotes her entire department in this issue to a report of the Children's Theatre Conference held late this summer in New York City, she will resume the reporting of significant events in children's theatre throughout the country, with the December issue of DRAMATICS. If you are doing interesting work in children's theatre which you should like to see reported in this Department, please report your activities at once to Miss Horton at the address given in the box heading on page 18.—  
EDITOR

Others who had much to contribute to the discussion were: John Ashby Conway, University of Washington, Seattle; Kenneth L. Graham, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Madge Miller, playwright, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Clare Tree Major of New York, and Sara Spencer Campbell, Children's Theatre Press editor.

Another notable conference event was the very interesting demonstration performance with child and adult cast of *The Pixie and the Leprechaun*, by Marjorie Ripp, presented by Adelphi College, Garden City, Long Island, Grace Stanistreet, director. Also there was an excellent creative dramatics demonstration led by Rita Criste of Evanston, Ill.

One of the conference highlights was the performance of *JOHNNY APPLESEED* by the Portland, Maine, Traer Theatre, under the direction of Margaret Ellen Clifford. This theatre is run entirely by high school age actors and stage hands. It was an experience to see these youngsters assemble their stage, get into costumes and make-up, put on the show, strike the set and take apart the stage itself and shift it onto the giant truck ready for further touring. An education in itself even without the actual producing of the play.

A Lyric Theatre Demonstration by Edwin Strawbridge was another important contribution to the conference. It followed a delightful supper at Mr. Strawbridge's country home.

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honey in the hive. Mr. Maxwell immediately visitors himself the future president of the United States. He starts a campaign

# On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with

## The National Thespian Society

### Casper, Wyo.

NATRONA COUNTY High School (Thespian Troupe 1): *Night Must Fall, Uncle Fred Flits By*. Eleven students granted Thespian membership during the 1948-49 season. Frank F. Dillon, sponsor.

### Johnstown, Ohio

JOHNSTOWN-MONROE High School (Thespian Troupe 7): *And Came the Spring, Nine Girls, They Called Him Jesus, Waltz Time, Johnstown Alphabet* (revue). Three programs presented over Station WCLT. Fourteen students granted Thespian membership under the sponsorship of Marjorie Marie Woodward.—William Smith, Secretary

### Aurora, Nebr.

AURORA High School (Thespian Troupe 17): *Sulphur and Molasses, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Tattletale, Sod, Leaping Lena, Bluebeard, The Least of These, Hills of Erie, The Woman Along the Road, The Wedding of Jack and Jill, Change in Fashion, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Twenty-six students awarded Thespian membership. Loine Gaines, troupe sponsor.—Joan Diffendafer, Secretary

### Rexburg, Idaho

MADISON High School (Thespian Troupe 10): *The Atomic Blonde, Through the Keyhole, The Hills of Erie*. Meetings devoted to study of make-up, casting, and reading of plays. Twelve students granted Thespian membership with C. Drue Cooper as sponsor.—Norma Jean Archibald, Secretary

### Noblesville, Ind.

NOBLESVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 24): *Brother Goose, One Foot in Heaven, The Happy Journey, Country Cousin, House of Greed*. Thirty-four students given Thespian membership, with Elna G. Hunter as troupe founder and sponsor.—Nancy Harrah, Secretary

### Clendenin, West Va.

CLENDENIN High School (Thespian Troupe 30): *Ah, Sweet Mystery, Consolation, Two Crooks and a Lady, Be a Little Cuckoo, Christmas Memories*. Entry in West Virginia High School Drama Festival. Twelve students granted Thespian membership with Lorraine Given as sponsor.—Phyllis Hall, Secretary

### Newton, Kansas

NEWTON Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 47): *One Wild Night, The Divine Flora, January Thaw, Mooncalf Mugford*. Awarded rating of Excellent in two district drama festivals. Presented original radio play over Station WIBW. Ten students granted Thespian membership. Alden Allbaugh, troupe sponsor.—Ramona McGeroge, Secretary

### Wyandotte, Mich.

ROOSEVELT High School (Thespian Troupe 50): *You Can't Take It With You, A Date With Judy, Kind Lady, The Happy Journey, Two Crooks and a Lady, America Can Sing* (music festival). Three radio programs given over Station WJJW. Thirty-five students given Thespian membership with Lawrence L. Johnson as sponsor.—Ellen Barr, Secretary

### Albion, Mich.

WASHINGTON GARDNER High School (Thespian Troupe 53): *The Ninth Guest, January Thaw, Promote the General Welfare, Nobody Sleeps, The Happy Journey*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of make-up and reading of one-act plays. Nineteen students granted Thespian membership. Lorraine Sharp, troupe sponsor.—Frances Hawes, Secretary

### Blackville, W. Va.

CLAY-BATTELLE High School (Thespian Troupe 54): *Meet Me in St. Louis, Pink and Patches, I'm A Fool, Which Is the Way to Boston?* A number of students attended dramatic performances given at West Virginia University. Twenty-four students received Thespian membership under the sponsorship of Edna Berdine.—Flora Mae Haught, Secretary

### Fithian, Ill.

OAKWOOD TOWNSHIP High School (Thespian Troupe 62): *We Shook the Family Tree, June Mad, Dust of the Road, Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*. Participated in sectional drama festival held at Champaign, Illinois. Nineteen students given Thespian membership. Ann Ogan, troupe sponsor.—Patricia Longstreth, Secretary

### Etowah, Tenn.

ETOWAH High School (Thespian Troupe 82): *Life with Father, Cheorio My Dear, You Can't Take It With You, A Quiet Home Wedding, Glamour, The Enchanted Ring, Make Room for Rodney*, original Thanksgiving skit. Observance of National Drama Week. Make-up and history of drama subjects studied at dramatics club meetings. Twelve students granted Thespian membership. Jessie Kelly, troupe sponsor.—Polly Ellen Webb, Secretary

### Jamestown, Tenn.

WORK Institute (Thespian Troupe 86): *Green Shudders, Let Me Grow Up, Cupids Bow, Two Birds with One Stone, Make Room for Rodney, The Dummy*. Christmas pageant, beauty revue, stunt night. Entry in district declamatory contest. Nine students given Thespian membership. Mrs. Richard Womack, troupe sponsor.—Jimmy Williams, Secretary

### Bellefontaine, Ohio

ELLEFONTAINE High School (Thespian Troupe 100): *Campus Quarantine, Ghost of the Air, Almost Eighteen, A Christmas Awakening, Elmer, Among Us Girls, Bread, Pickles*, (operetta). Dramatics club meetings given to study of make-up, book reviews, and reading of plays. Exchanged program with Urbana High School. Twenty-one students received Thespian membership. Marjorie Ramage, troupe sponsor.—Janet Parrot, Secretary

SUMMARY OF THE 1948-49 THESPIAN SEASON	
(The information found below is based upon data furnished by 668 Thespian-affiliated high schools reporting as of August 1, 1949. The total number of secondary schools affiliated with the Society on this date was 983.)	
Number of major productions reported	1,504*
Average number of major productions among schools reporting	2.25
Estimated number of major productions given during the season by all high schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society	2,212
Distribution of major play productions among schools reporting:	

Schools	Number of Productions
17	0
117	1
305	2
167	3
41	4
15	5
5	6
1	7

Number of schools reporting evenings of one-act plays given during the season	64
Estimated number of one-act play productions given during the season by all Thespian-affiliated high schools (average of 4 each)	3,932
Number of schools reporting productions of operettas, pageants, revues, minstrel shows, chorale festivals, etc	356
Number of schools reporting participation in play festivals and contests	334
Number of schools participating in radio broadcasting activities	282

Most frequently produced full-length plays among Thespian-affiliated schools during the 1948-49 season:

Title	Number of Productions	Title	Number of Productions
Our Hearts Were Young and Gay	64	Arsenic and Old Lace	16
We Shook the Family Tree	47	Life With Father	16
Date With Judy, A	44	Little Women	15
Meet Me in St. Louis	31	Nine Girls	13
You Can't Take It With You	30	Our Town	14
Dear Ruth	28	George Washington Slept Here	12
I Remember Mama	23	Brother Goose	11
Divine Flora, The	20	Seven Sisters	11
Night of January 16th, The	19	One Foot in Heaven	11
January Thaw	16	Ramshackle Inn	10

\*These figures include evenings of one-act plays considered the equivalent of full-length plays, but do not include productions of operettas, pageants, musical shows, chorale reading festivals, and other special performances.

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to an attractive, somewhat older man, who, trying hard to be fair and give Jenny a chance to meet eligible youngsters, almost risks losing the girl he really cares for. But it turns out that this man has been Jenny's choice from the very first. Her consenting to go out with an amusing but somewhat over-enthusiastic follower of jive, has been in the line of duty, and the young man's amusing antics end up by boring her. The whole play is made doubly attractive and amusing by the presence of several young girls and the young boy above mentioned, all of whom somehow manage to make Jenny "hep." Or, rather, so they think, since Jenny remains to the end a very lovely, simple and attractive girl, and her union with the man she loves is a proper solution to all the plots and plans of the various characters.



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Co-author of **Ladies in Retirement**. This play came to New York after a long and successful run in England. In many ways it is a model of writing and construction, and a work of extraordinary suspense and dramatic impact. **6 men, 4 women; 1 interior setting. Books, 85c. Fee, \$25. The Story.** Here is the story of Descius Heiss who, after a dark past in crime, settles in London and, to all appearances, is a respectable old gentleman. His chief aim in life is to provide happiness and security for his gifted daughter, Margaret, who has been brought up in complete ignorance of her father's past and is a promising young violinist, engaged to an attractive young doctor. Ostensibly Heiss runs an antique shop, but actually he buys and sells gold and jewels from thieves. He is involved with the shadiest and cleverest characters in the underworld, who commit the crimes on which he capitalizes. One of the basic secrets of his establishment is that in his shop there is a smelting furnace, skillfully concealed behind a mantelpiece. Archie Fellowes, a very ambitious and unscrupulous young man, accidentally discovers Heiss's secret

and from then on blackmails him. Heiss, in desperation for fear his secret will become known to Margaret, is driven to use violence on Archie. Margaret's fiance has brought to the old man two poison darts from the Orient and one of these Heiss uses on Archie, who dies immediately and whose body is disposed of by Heiss. Scotland Yard becomes at once active and the old man realizes that he must either face the consequences of his act or quickly escape out of the country. When at last the police come closer and closer to the facts in the case, Heiss getting more desperate for fear that Margaret will learn the truth, the latter uses the second of the two poisoned darts upon himself. Shortly thereafter, and before the old man dies, the Police inspector comes to Heiss's shop and Heiss believes that this is the end. As a matter of fact, however, the inspector, still unaware of Heiss's role in the crime, has come simply to ask for a particular antique which has caught his eye. Heiss then dies and his daughter remains ignorant of what he has done.

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honey in the hive. Mr. Maxwell immediately visions himself the future president of the United States. He starts campaigning like mad and the whole family's hobnobbing with the town's elite, much to the chagrin of son Wilbur who's irked by baths, manners, combs, and Arthur — the Coady's young son. Well, the Maxwells don't have time for their neighbors anymore, they're too busy. Finally comes the third act and the big election. The whole family is sitting around the radio, listening to the election returns. It finally dawns on them that Papa is losing the election and losing it badly. The Coadys then disown them, and Mr. Maxwell, friendless and humiliated informs the family they're moving to another town. The neighbors then start returning their borrowed goods, and it's over this stack of boxes, umbrellas, fishing tackle and everything else that the Maxwells realize that the real honey in everyone's hive is his friends just like these—and they move back in.

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### Struthers, Ohio

**S**TRUTHERS High School (Thespian Troupe 89): *We Shook the Family Tree, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Grapes for Dinner*. Gave three programs over Station WFMJ of Youngstown, Ohio. Six students awarded Thespian membership. Oliver Davis, sponsor.—*Mary Lou Toto, Secretary*

### Gettysburg, Pa.

**G**ETTYSBURG High School (Thespian Troupe 95): *Beauty and the Beef, The Bat, Pink and Patches*, television revue, special Christmas program. Presented program over Station WCHA. Eighteen students given Thespian membership, with Betty Brandon as sponsor.—*Jane Deardorff, Secretary*

### Neenah, Wis.

**N**EENAH High School (Thespian Troupe 103): *Anne of Green Gables, A Date With Judy*. Original radio script presented over Station WNAM. Eleven students granted Thespian membership. Helen Paulson, troupe sponsor.

### Akron, Ohio

**S**PRINGFIELD High School (Thespian Troupe 104): *My Sister Eileen, An Empty Gesture, The Ghost Train, The Skin Game*. Monthly dramatics club meetings devoted to study of make-up and directing. Forty-two students awarded Thespian membership, with Doris Smith as sponsor.—*Lucille Jarrard, Secretary*

### Newport, Vt.

**N**EWPORT High School (Thespian Troupe 107): *Love Is Too Much Trouble, Sitters' Revolt, Hurrah for Dear Old Rutgers, Shock of His Life, Let's Make-Up*, Christmas carol, Christmas pageant. Participation in district drama contest (won first place honors). Twelve students given Thespian membership with Alice

Coapland as sponsor.—*Carole J. Tollerton, Secretary*

### Portland, Oregon

**J**EFFERSON High School (Thespian Troupe 124): *Charley's Aunt, Wedding Shoes, Jane Eyre, The Little Red School House*. Social studies skits given weekly during fall semester. Two programs presented over Stations KBPS and KPOJ. Thespian members attended performances of *Night Must Fall, Medea, Torch Bearers, and Growing Pains*. Thespian membership granted to fourteen students, with Melba Day Sparks as sponsor.—*Doris Essbey, President*

### We'tumpka, Ala.

**W**E'TUMPKA High School (Thespian Troupe 125): *The Little Minister, Growing Pains, Billy's First Date, The Princess Runs Away*. Dramatics club meetings given to presentation of monologues and pantomimes. Thespian membership awarded to fifteen students, with Vivian Parsons as troupe sponsor.—*Billie Jane Macon, Secretary*

### Carlbad, Calif.

**A**RMY AND NAVY Academy (Thespian Troupe 130): *Snow White and the Seven*

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**D**warfs, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Married at Sunrise, Travellers, The Hundred Trick (received first place honors in the Pasadena Playhouse drama tournament). Twenty-nine students given Thespian membership. Virginia Atkinson, troupe sponsor.—*Stanley Albright, Secretary*

### Laredo, Texas

**M**ARTIN High School (Thespian Troupe 138): *Green Grow the Lilacs, Remember This*. Won third place honors in district drama contest. Eight students awarded Thespian membership, with Mrs. C. D. Babb as troupe sponsor.—*Virginia Reuthinger, Secretary*

### Bradford, Ill.

**B**RADFORD High School (Thespian Troupe 139): *Professor How Could You? The Skeleton Walks*. Mary I. Parr, troupe sponsor.—*Gertrude McKeon, Secretary*

### Lookout, West Va.

**N**UTTALL High School (Thespian Troupe 140): *Have a Heart, Aunt Cathie's Cat How to Propose, The Light Went Out, Municipal Davenport, Gals Are Like That*. Awarded first place in district drama festival with performance of *The Happy Journey*. Seven students given Thespian membership. Florence Croft, troupe sponsor.—*Betty Jo Rogers, Secretary*

### Kingman, Kansas

**K**INGMAN High School (Thespian Troupe 146): *This Ghost Business, Sittin' Through, Static, How to Propose, Want'd a Turkey, Lesson from Luke, Not Quite Such A Goose, A Minuet*, minstrel show. Participated in district speech tournament. Presented *Rip Van Winkle* as radio program. Seventeen students awarded Thespian membership, with Virginia Marie Mueller as sponsor.—*Donna Van Landingham, Secretary*

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While the remaining nine in the cast are by no means slighted, all of them having important "spots" in the show, yet the memory load is relatively light — as it should be when a large cast is used. This makes for effective group rehearsals.

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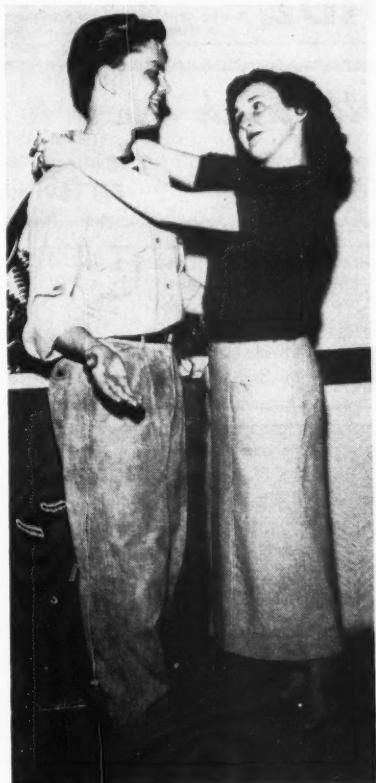
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### Wappingers Falls, N. Y.

WAPPINGERS Central High School (Thespian Troupe 185): *Dear Ruth, Why The Chimes Rang, The Gondoliers*. Nine students awarded Thespian membership with Albert G. Duke as sponsor.

### Brownsville, Pa.

BROWNSVILLE Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 187): *A Date With Judy, Till Death Do Us Part, Pinocchio, Smell of Yukon, Grapes for Dinner, Merry As You Make It, Heart Trouble, Merchant of Venice, Moon Keeps Shining*. Entry in county drama festival. Programs presented over Stations WESA and WMBS. Twenty students granted Thespian membership, with Jean E. Donahey as sponsor.

### Tarentum, Pa.

TARENTUM High School (Thespian Troupe 193): *When I Was Green, The Family Upstairs*. Seven students granted Thespian membership. Dorothy Tipper, troupe sponsor.—Lewis Goslin, Secretary

### Oelwein, Iowa

OLEWEIN Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 194): *Our Town, Night of January 16, Farewell Cruel World, Special Guest, Hi Ways and Bi Ways*. Entry in play festival, with rating of Excellent received at the State University of Iowa Play Festival. Broadcast over Station KSUL. Ten students awarded Thespian membership, with Maureen McGiven as sponsor.—Marlene Zummak, Secretary

### Fort Benton, Montana

ORT BENTON High School (Thespian Troupe 195): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, You Can't Take It With You, No, Not The Russians, Antic Spring*. Entry in the State Drama Festival. Several student-directed one-act plays given during the season. Seventeen students given Thespian membership under the direction of Mrs. Audrey Hilton.—Patricia St. Peter, Secretary

### Charleston, West Va.

HARLESTON High School (Thespian Troupe 200): *Love Is Too Much Trouble, Out of the Frying Pan, The Valiant, The Trysting Place, The Early Worm, The Farnsworth Nose, There's a Crowd, Good News, Were You There When They Crucified My Lord, The Nativity*. Also presented twelve student-directed one-acts as class projects. Two radio shows over Station WCHS. Eighteen students granted Thespian membership, with Florence Martin as director.

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if she doesn't have the grades. She has always had everything she wanted and it isn't long until she acquires Lloyd as her manager, much to his chagrin and Candy's disgust. (Men are so simple). Also, if Candy doesn't agree to drop silently out of the race, Mr. Midgely will boot them out of their apartment (He owns everything), fire Mrs. Norton and see that she is never given another position in this town. Candy's troubles are mounting by the moment and it looks like that scholarship was just a pleasant pipe dream when, Bingo — there is a knock at the door and in walk two characters from out west. Well, Sir, you have no idea how their appearance on the scene can change everything, that is, with the help of Niobe, their burro. Niobe is never seen on the stage, but she is surely heard from, and is forever "kicking up" a commotion and causes almost everyone to be evicted before a little poetic justice is handed out and things are on an even keel again. But not before your audience is weak from laughter from this jolly, homey little play that is just what the "Doctor" ordered. You will find it a delight to produce, and your cast will say it's the best yet.

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### Wallace, Idaho

**W**ALLACE High School (Thespian Troupe 203): *The More the Merrier, You Can't Take It With You, Dear Ruth*, talent show. Also presented a series of one-act plays under student direction. Participation in the district declamatory contest. Eight students awarded Thespian membership, with Hazel Soiseth as sponsor.—*Bud Hall, Secretary*

### Cristobal, Canal Zone

**C**RISTOBAL High School (Thespian Troupe 217): *What a Life, Ramshackle Inn, The Valiant, The Idlings of the King*, Talent Night. Presented radio program. Attended plays presented by the Balboa High School Little Theatre. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of make-up, staging, types of plays, etc. Eleven students granted Thespian membership under the direction of Paul L. Beck, troupe sponsor.—*Izzy Wachtel, Secretary*

### Baker, Oregon

**S**ENIOR High School (Thespian Troupe 221): *Heaven Can Wait, Alias the Butler, The Art of Proposing*, Variety Show. Two programs presented over Station KBKR. Thespian membership awarded to fourteen students, with Jean Mizer as troupe sponsor.

### Lincoln, Ill.

**L**INCOLN Community High School (Thespian Troupe 225): *We Shook the Family Tree, One Foot in Heaven, Open Door, Consolation, Abe Lincoln in Illinois (scenes), Blow Me Down*. Entry in the district speech festival. Attended performance of *The Imaginary Invalid* given by the University High School at Normal Illinois. Sixteen students given Thespian membership with Warren F. Craig as sponsor.

### Kansas City, Kansas

**R**OSEDALE Junior-Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 232): *The Inner Willy, Life With Father, Ghost of Grand Canyon, Who Gets the Car Tonight, Meet Arizona*. Won third place honors in the State Drama Festival. Dramatics club meetings given to study of types of drama. Ten students received Thespian membership with Edith Youmans as troupe sponsor.—*Helen Kostas, Secretary*

### Prophetstown, Ill.

**C**OMMUNITY High School (Thespian Troupe 244): *Brother Goose, Just Ducky, Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*. Fifteen stu-

dents granted Thespian membership. Clarence J. Brown, troupe sponsor.

### Canon City, Colo.

**C**ANON CITY High School (Thespian Troupe 246): *Cap and Gown, Crack-Up, Tiger Tales*. Frances Finnegan, troupe sponsor.—*Florence Sardini, Secretary*

### Rock Springs, Wyo.

**R**OCK SPRINGS High School Thespian Troupe 248): *A Date With Judy, The Overnight Ghost, One Egg, Blackout Mystery, Fireman, Save My Child, Tiger's Claw*. Program of three one-act plays given as major evening performance. Eight students given



Scene from *Icebound* as given by students of the Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, High School (Thespian Troupe 190). Directed by Evelyn Townsend.

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Through the Night, as given at the Winchester, Mass., High School (Thespian Troupe 295) with Thomas A. Morse and Marion Bailey as directors.

Thespian membership, with Gwen Christiansen as troupe sponsor.—Margaret Brown, Secretary

### Bakersfield, Calif.

AST BAKERSFIELD High School (Thespian Troupe 265): *My Sister Eileen, Meet Me in St. Louis, Magnolia Blooms, The Fisherman, Murder, Murder, The Beggar and the King, He Ain't Done Right By Nell Gander Sauce, Once in a Blue Moon, "Gay Nineties Revue."* Series of four programs presented over radio Stations KPMC and KERN. Fifteen students awarded Thespian membership, with Mary Louise Gaylord as sponsor.—Farley Young, Secretary

### Cheney, Wash.

CHENEY Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 267): *The Sleeping Beauty, We Snook the Family Tree, 'Op-o-my-Thumb, Carnival Vodvil.* Six performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* given on Saturday mornings at the Orpheum Theatre of Spokane under sponsorship of the Spokane Children's Theatre. Twenty-one students given Thespian membership during the season with Leone Webber as director.—Cheral Sumsion, Secretary

### Boonville, Indiana

BONVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 269): *June Mad, Sauce for the Gosling, Mushrooms Coming Up, Bell Maker of Nolz,* special program for Women's Club. Series of fourteen skits given during weekly meetings of the dramatics club. Acting, pantomime and make-up among subjects considered at the dramatics club meetings. Nine students granted Thespian membership. Ravia Garrison, troupe sponsor.—Lois Dunaway, Secretary

### Pittsburg, Calif.

PITTSBURG High School (Thespian Troupe 287): *Why the Chimes Rung, Elmer, Idlings of the King, The Unseen, The Florist Shop,* verse choir performance. Participation in Shakespearean contest. Presentation of two radio programs. A number of students attended performance of *Hamlet* and *The Blue Danube.* Twenty students received Thespian membership. Viola Johnson, troupe sponsor.

### Rochelle, Ill.

ROCHELLE TOWNSHIP High School (Thespian Troupe 291): *A Date With Judy, Uncle Fred Flitz By, The Happy Journey, Who Gets the Car Tonight? What's in a Name? One Word Alone,* Christmas program. Participation in district and regional drama festival. Granted membership to seven students, with Lorraine Marcum as sponsor.—Marilyn Marrissey, Secretary

### Pomona, Calif.

POMONA High School (Thespian Troupe 295): *The Divine Flora, Quality Street, Sleeping Beauty, H.M.S. Pinafore.* Participation in the drama festival sponsored by the Pasadena Playhouse. Twenty students given Thespian membership, with Carolyn Flanagan as founder and sponsor of troupe.—Jeannine Wasz, Secretary

### Ronceverte, West Va.

GREENBRIER High School (Thespian Troupe 298): *Pride and Prejudice,* senior class play, entry in district and state drama festivals. Monthly dramatics club meetings devoted to study of production plans, play standards, etc. Twelve students granted Thespian membership. Muriel B. Bartholomew, troupe sponsor.—Jackie Prillaman, Secretary

### Marked Tree, Ark.

MARKED TREE High School (Thespian Troupe 301): *Life Begins at Sixteen, Swamp House, Silence Please, Sauce for the Gosling, Cornhusk Doll, Alice's Blue Gown, For Distinguished Service, Last of the Lowries.* Entry in local drama festival. A number of students saw performance of *Man and Superman* with Maurice Evans. Six students granted Thespian membership, with Marie Thost Pierce as sponsor.—Mildred Legget, Secretary

### Madison, So. Dak.

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 302): *The Big Potato, Arsenic and Old Lace, Where the Cross Is Made, The Odyssey of Runyan Jones, Be Home by Midnight,* series of musical and poetic readings. Nineteen students given Thespian membership with Minka E. Hall as sponsor.—Barbara Pirwitz, Secretary

### River Forest, Ill.

TRINITY High School (Thespian Troupe 303): *Stardust, Jessica's Journey, Ladies of the Mop.* A number of students attended Catholic theatre festival but did not participate. Twenty-four students received Thespian membership. Sister Marie Monica, troupe sponsor.—Marlene Elleson, Secretary

### Columbus, Ohio

UPPER ARLINGTON High School (Thespian Troupe 332): *Ladies in Retirement, And So They Came to Bethlehem, Captain Applejack, Barretts of Wimpole Street.* Twenty-four students granted membership in Thespian Troupe with Don H. Poston as sponsor.—Anna Kammerling, Secretary

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By Christopher Sergel

Paul Jones takes arms against a sea of troubles, but one discouraging wave mounts after another. Jane ordered a sundae; Paul didn't have the money so he had to borrow from her! That started it. To replenish his purse, Paul turned to his camera. He'd take pictures — with some borrowed equipment — and this gets Paul's father practically accused of swiping an enlarger. In the meantime brother Junior scrubs an expensive (and borrowed) lens with sand and Paul gets the blame! Paul sells chicken feed, to pay for the damages. This feed (accidentally, of course) kills the neighbors' chickens. This seems like too much, but Paul's father loses his job because of Paul. It seems as though Paul is about to sink and drown

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### Searcy, Ark.

**S**EARCY High School (Thespian Troupe 340): *The Little Minister*, *Great Scotts*, *When Boy Friends Meet*, *There Comes a Time*, choral readings, program for American Legion. Monthly dramatics meetings devoted to study of interpretation and pantomime. Eleven students granted Thespian membership, with Blanche M. Davis as sponsor.—Alice Marie Webb, Secretary



Scene from *Sixteen in August* as presented at the Madison, Iowa, High School (Thespian Troupe 229) with Pearl E. Bagenstos as director.

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### Huntington, Utah

**N**ORTH EMERY High School (Thespian Troupe 347): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *Wheat Fires*, *Don't Feed the Animals*. Twenty-one students received Thespian membership. Grace Johansen, troupe sponsor.—Renone Littlefield, Secretary

### Abilene, Texas

**A**BILENE High School (Thespian Troupe 353): *The Tempest*, *Two Thousand Nights in the Theater*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Skin of Our Teeth* (first act). Forty students granted Thespian membership. Ernest Sublett, sponsor.—Ruby Seider, Secretary

### Jamestown, N. Y.

**J**AMESTOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 364): *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Mummy and the Mumps*, *Sinister House*, *Black Magic*, *Henrietta the Eighth*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Black Out*, *Who Gets the Car Tonight?*, *Out of this World*. Entry in drama

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festival. Presentation of radio programs over Stations WJTN and WJOC. Twenty-three students awarded Thespian membership.—Myrtle L. Paetznick, troupe sponsor.

### Alma, Ark.

**A**LMA High School (Thespian Troupe 385): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *June Mad*, *Mother Walks Out*. Make-up, stage terminology, one-act plays, and recordings were among the subjects considered at the dramatics club meetings. Received rating of "Excellent" in drama festival sponsored by the University of Arkansas. Mrs. Kenneth A. Teague, troupe sponsor.—Barbara Byars, Secretary

### Marietta, Ohio

**M**ARIETTA High School (Thespian Troupe 386): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Happy Journey*, *Which Is the Way to Boston?* *Mushrooms Coming Up*, *Alexander Proposes*, *Ghost to Ghost*, *The Terrible Night*. Entry in State Drama Festival. Three radio programs given over Station WMOA. Twelve students awarded Thespian membership. Martha Harris, troupe sponsor.—Nancy Calvin, Secretary

### Independence, Mo.

**W**ILLIAM CHRISMAN High School (Thespian Troupe 389): *Cuckoos on the Hearth*, *Brother Goose*, *Double Door*, *The Trysting Place*, *The Summons of Sariel*, *The Clod*, *Jazz and Minuet*, *Command Performance*, *Saturday's Children*.

### Edmonds, Wash.

**E**DMONDS High School (Thespian Troupe 424): *Charley's Aunt*, *You Can't Take It With You*. Janice M. Loschen, troupe sponsor.—Carol Bergman, Secretary

### St. Clairsville, Ohio

**S**T. CLAIRSVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 429): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Nine Girls*, *Off A Pewter Platter*, *The Friday Foursome*, *Packs a Box*. Twelve students granted Thespian membership. Janice Rexroad, troupe sponsor.—Joan Frazier, Secretary

### Kingsport, Tenn.

**D**OBYNES-BENNET High School (Thespian Troupe 432): *Headed for Eden*, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *Moonalf Mugford*. Participated in various speech festivals with first-place honors won in several events. Presented radio program over Station WKZP. Ten students granted Thespian membership. Nancy J. Necessary, troupe sponsor.—Marie Ellis, Secretary

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## What's New Among Books and Plays

The purpose of this department is to keep our readers posted on the latest theatre and drama publications available from publishers. Mention or review of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by Dramatics. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only.

Walter H. Baker Company  
178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

*Auditions For Radio and School, Volume II.*, by Emily Davie. This book is a collection of short monologues and character portraits to supply audition material for actors and speech students which is complete, varied, and actable. These could be used effectively as class work in character interpretation as well as radio work. The quality and variety of material is excellent. All types of characters are represented; and although some exercises are included for advanced actors and radio narrators, all are within the possibilities of high school and college actors. An excellent and inexpensive book of exercises.—Katharine Taylor

*She Says*, twelve humorous monologues, by Edna Stephens Maxwell. A new collection of character impersonations of different types of women, such as the club president, the gum-chewing beautician, the "ailor" in the doctor's office, or the busy-body calling on the minister's wife. All are short selections that would be very good for use when appearing before women's groups. Typical satires on women.—Mary Parrish

*Hits for Misses*, by Joyce R. Ingalls. A collection of thirteen monologues easy for the teen-aged girl to interpret, as they picture her in life-like situations that are well within the range of every high school — dating, learning to drive, Christmas shopping; in fact, every phase of her life. A boon to the teacher look-

ing for suitable material for beginners in interpretation.—Mary Parrish

Samuel French

25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.  
*The Ghost of Possum Hollow*, a farce comedy in three acts, by Walt Draper. 8 m., 4 w. Royalty, \$25.00. While a group of high school girls and their chaperon are preparing for a picnic in their club house, a severe storm develops. As a result of the storm, the house is invaded not only by a group of mischievous school boys but also by a pair of jewel thieves. This is one of those comedies in which everything happens to hold an audience in suspense. Excitement mounts with every minute and confusion reigns, but all ends well. A play, suitable for high school or club that likes variety, spirited action with an element of mystery from a farcical viewpoint.—Helen Movius.

*Dangerous Nan McGrew*, a mystery-comedy in three acts, by George Batson. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$25.00. This is a mystery with a difference: Both the leader of a gang of thieves and the one who outwits them are women. The scene is laid in a deserted house on a stormy night. A group of students with their teacher have taken refuge in the house where an accused murderer is hiding. During the night a number of strange characters assemble. These prove to be the real criminals who are finally captured through the efforts of the teacher. A note of romance is also present. This is a high-spirited play, overflowing with

suspense, wild action and mystery so much liked by high school actors.—Helen Movius

*Circus Days*, a play in four scenes, by Aurand Harris (A winner in the John Golden playwriting contest, 1945) 15 m., 4 w. Royalty, \$15.00. Here is a play that is *different*! The scenes are laid in the back yard of a circus and in a dressing tent. Much circus atmosphere is introduced. A circus loving boy visits the circus with his circus loving grandfather. Someway the boy manages to hideout from grandpa and for one day becomes a part of the circus. After several adventures there he agrees to go home so that he can tell his friends that he had acted in a circus. An attractive play, easy to cast but the many circus properties may present difficulties.—Helen Movius

Longmans, Green & Co., Inc.  
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

*Modern American Plays*, edited by Frederic G. Cassidy, University of Wisconsin. Price, \$3.50. Mr. Cassidy has chosen *Anna Christie*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Winterset*, *Watch on the Rhine*, and *Life With Father* as most representative of the different types of modern American drama, as well as illustrating recent experiments in dramatic writing. Each play is followed by a short biographical sketch of the author and several comments by leading dramatists at the time of the first appearance of the play. The latter are particularly interesting and provocative of discussion. A good book for high school reference or college study.—Mary Parrish

*Eastward in Eden*, the love story of Emily Dickinson, by Dorothy Gardner. Prepared by Nathaniel Edward Reed. 7 w., 8 m. Royalty, \$25.00. This is a delicate, simple, and dramatic presentation of the poet's great and lasting love for the Rev. Charles Wadsworth of Philadelphia. The facts may not be wholly true, from the biographers standpoint, but this play would be deserving of a place in the repertory of an American National Theatre. Its language is a little too beautiful and fine, its action a little too smoothly paced, its setting a little too rich and difficult for the average high school group; but with an experienced adult group, this play could be handled with great success. Costumed in the mid-nineteenth century, it affords an interesting experience in stage work.—Mary Ella Bovee

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.  
6 East 39th Street, New York, N. Y.

*Time for Elizabeth*, a comedy in three acts, by Norman Krasna and Groucho Marx. 6 w., 8 m. Royalty quoted upon request. This typical, romping and rollicking bit of good fun is just the sort that any community or Little Theatre group would enjoy producing. It needs a polished, sophisticated handling to get full results from its fast-paced, action-packed plot. There is an office scene for Act I, and a living room for the remaining two acts, so settings and properties offer little difficulty. The story is little more than the attempt of a middle-aged man to throw off the yoke of the daily grind and take up a leisurely residence in Florida.

*Jenny Kissed Me*, a comedy in three acts, by Jean Kerr. 9 w., 5 m. Royalty quoted upon request. No more thoroughly delightful play than this has been presented to the world of play producers in a long time. Although the story concerns Father Moynihan, of St. Mathew's, and his attempt to "make over" the niece of his housekeeper into a more socially desirable young lady, the religious element is secondary to the play's sound, natural, and wholesome brand of good humor. The lines are warm and rich in the wisdom that comes with living; the action is simple and lively; there is a well-balanced cast of young and old, straight and character. This comedy is genuinely American; it deserves many productions among schools, churches, Little Theatres, and community groups.—Mary Ella Bovee

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\*See the Annual Thespian Play Production Report on page 20 of this issue.



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## BAKER'S PLAYS

The Northwestern Press  
2200 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
*Fundamentals of Play Production*, by Samuel D. Schonberger, 1949. This experienced author has organized in a simple and interesting manner the steps in play production into two parts: I, The Play and the Players, teaching his reader to "know a good play, and then to find and train players who can make it sound and look even better from the stage"; the chapters in Part II deal with all the steps in stagecraft. This book is of value as a text in teaching play production, containing, at the end of each chapter, a good set of topics and questions, as well as scenes for classroom drill. It is also designed as a manual for inexperienced directors of plays in church and community theatres.—June Lingo

Dramatic Publishing Company  
1706 S. Prairie Avenue, Chicago 16, Illinois

*Meet Me in St. Louis* is a three-act dramatization of the Sally Benson story. 9 women and 7 men. Royalty, \$25.00. Mr. Smith, a business man, has been offered a better job in New York but it is the year of the World's Fair in St. Louis and the family all object to his leaving. They have looked forward to the fair for so long. The mother, the maid, the four daughters unite to block the move. There is the story too, of brother Lon and his romance. It is a pleasing family situation with dialog better than average. Community theatres will find it a better choice than secondary schools.—Roberta D. Sheets

*The Professor's Circus*, a three-act comedy, by Wm. Davidson, for 9 m., and 12 w. Royalty, \$25.00. Katie, a circus girl is going to college. She fails the entrance exams but by substituting herself for an exchange student, Katie is enrolled and finds college wonderful. She is soon the outstanding student and about to be rewarded when the real student appears. There is some good satire on university courses

and professors. The characters are varied and broadly drawn, the plot a bit obvious.—Roberta D. Sheets

*Three to Get Married*, a three-act comedy, by Wm. Davidson. 8 m., 6 w., extras. Royalty, \$25.00. Sharlie is engaged to Dale and is carried away by his stories of his explorations. Her kid sister, Kicky — wise beyond her years — suspects he is a phony and she sets out to prove it. The denouement comes on the wedding day and Sharlie is saved for her old lover. The juveniles are somewhat overdrawn, the older characters seem real. Youngsters usually like for justice to triumph as it does in *Three to Get Married*.—Roberta D. Sheets

Eldridge Entertainment House  
Franklin, Ohio, and Denver Colorado

*Everything's on Ice*, a farce in three acts, by Camilla McLaren Summers. 8 w., 8 m. Royalty, ten dollars first performance; all additional performances, two dollars and fifty cents. The plot concerns the efforts of the Foley daughters, assisted by the Swedish maid, Gunda, who decide to rent their parents' room during their visit to a Chicago convention. The renters consist of a Hollywood talent scout, and a boxer with his manager. Then Don Foley, their brother arrives unexpectedly with a friend, followed by their Aunt Carol, and, later, by their parents. Things unravel a bit too satisfactorily at the end, and the beginning is forced, but the lines are good and the play especially suitable to a high school cast.—June Lingo

*The Grapevine*, a comedy in three acts, by James F. Stone. 10 w. Royalty free for two performances; all additional performances, two dollars and fifty cents each. The story deals with the trials and tribulations of a group of girls who are launching a new magazine on July 4th. With his entry in the beauty contest, Uncle John provides a check that gets lost at the time that trouble appears in the form

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of a threatened libel suit, but "all's well that ends well." This play would be well suited to the needs of girls' schools or clubs.—June Lingo

The Heuer Publishing Co.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

*Big As Life*, a comedy in three acts, by Earl Louis Russell. 6 w., 4 m., extras. Royalty, \$10. Seventeen year old Eddie Hopkins has a super-inflated ego that has enabled him gradually to become boss of his own household. Girl friend, Barbara, is about the only one who fails to appreciate Eddie's amazing genius. Finally Eddie gets himself into a situation with a twenty-one year old siren recently moved next door and who believes some of his big talk, and Eddie sees for himself the faults of his personality. Changes are forthcoming and Eddie is reunited with Barbara. This play contains little or no action and the dialogue is humorous only in spots. The minor characters have no color or personality. The play would be best suited for high school groups.—Katharine Taylor

*Three Fingers in the Door*, a mystery-comedy in three acts, by Felicia Metcalfe. 6 m., 4 m. Royalty, \$10.00. At 11:30 on a cold, rainy night, Sylvia Long, her aunt, her girl friend, and her fiancé come to visit Uncle Gregory Long, a wealthy old man who lives in a once handsome but now run down mansion. They find some peculiar people who seem to be in charge, and some fast, furious, and mysterious action occurs. The peculiar people turn out to be a gang of professional crooks and are captured in the last act as usual. This play is recommended to high school groups as being very good for its type. It has the advantage of some especially interesting women characters which students will enjoy doing and the mysterious effects are very simple to produce. High school and junior high audiences will love it.—Katharine Taylor

Row-Peterson & Company  
1911 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, Ill.

*Hoppsville Holiday*, a comedy in three acts, by Nathan and Ruth Hale. 9 m., 6 w. Royalty on application. Liz and Connie, two high school girls, go visiting in Hoppsville with the purpose of dating the local football heroes. Aunt Elizabeth, their hostess, is an old fashioned person who believes in simple pleasures. The girls do meet some football boys as well as Cousin Lester and his pal, Albert. There is much scheming, an elopement, a fight and all sorts of activity. In fact, there is too much. The characters are a bit overdrawn and the over-acting problem would doubtless arise. The play is written for central staging and can easily be so staged.—Roberta D. Sheets

*No Moon Tonight*, a farce in three acts, by Ralph MacDonald. 6 m., 5 w. Royalty on application. The director who wished to risk a farce now and then will find *No Moon Tonight* good fun. Mr. Terry is the absent-minded astronomer and his family is desperate. Ellen, the older daughter, fills out an application for her father for an important job in a Chicago planetarium and Susan, the younger sister mails it. Things begin to happen when a representative of the planetarium arrives with the contract. Mrs. Terry signs it but, alas, the girls have added qualifications father does not have. Eventually, father proves to be more capable than the girls dream, he gets the job and everyone is proud of him. The characters are not as broad as in most farces, and could be found in the average group. The play is well edited.—Roberta D. Sheets



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and they do everything they can to make her leave. The chagrin is almost more than the daughter can stand. Then the popular young Zoology professor begins to show an interest in Mother, as do the rest of the men on campus. Mother, though a Freshman, is still quite a girl! So, this combination of the humorous and the touching presents you with an iridescently gay and poignant comedy.

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